

JUDAISM

Judaism, Christianity, and Islam: The Sanctity and Centrality of Jerusalem:

Papers from a Conference

*Philip S. Alexander, David Golinkin, Sara Japhet,
Hava Lazarus-Yafeh, Lee I. Levine, Stefan C. Reif,
E. P. Sanders, Robert L. Wilken*

World Over and Jewish Cultural Literacy

Brooke Baldwin

Remembering Anne Frank

Jacob B. Michaelsen

The Quest for Jerusalem

Howard Schwartz

The New Liturgies

Arnold Jacob Wolf

Where the Earth and the Sky Kiss

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Reviews

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The Sanctity and Centrality of Jerusalem to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam: Introduction

THIS PAST SUMMER, FORTY INTERNATIONALLY RENOWNED scholars convened in Jerusalem for deliberations on *The Sanctity and Centrality of Jerusalem to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*.

The study of Jerusalem offers a unique opportunity to examine the impact of a dominant culture on a city. Each time Jerusalem was conquered and ruled by a different group, its physical appearance was inevitably reshaped, including the size and location of its public buildings, population, leadership, and governing institutions. What especially characterizes Jerusalem, of course, is the religious value it holds for each of the three major religions of the Western world. Dominated over the centuries by a variety of cultures and traditions, Jerusalem bears the stamp of each in its physical and spiritual legacies. It is fascinating, therefore, not only to study how each tradition has totally redefined this urban setting to suit its own political, social, and religious agendas, but also to compare the similarities and differences between them.

The recent political developments in the Middle East have been momentous and unprecedented. To help ensure their continuation and realization, they must be buttressed by a reevaluation and reinterpretation of the religious tenets in all traditions whose aim is, at times, confrontation and triumphalism. The purpose of these efforts should be the strengthening of each tradition's teachings regarding coexistence, tolerance, and the fundamental value of pluralism, along with a deeper understanding of what unifies them and what makes each unique and different. It is incumbent upon all who seek peace to reflect upon and search out the commonalities on the one hand, and define the differences on the other, for the purpose of mutual understanding and coexistence.

While many of the larger political issues, including the future of Jerusalem, will surface in the months and years ahead, Jewish and Moslem claims in the city, as well as a not insignificant Christian agenda, will be vigorously advanced.

It was therefore most appropriate for this academic conference to have convened in Jerusalem and to have afforded the opportunity to focus on the uniqueness and centrality of this holy city to each of the three major faiths of the Western world: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

The full proceedings of this conference will be published in the coming year by Continuum Publishing and Magnes Press.

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From the King's Sanctuary to the Chosen City

S A R A J A P H E T

TOWARDS THE END OF THE FIRST COMMONWEALTH, IN the seventh century B.C.E., a new concept is introduced in several biblical works, that of the chosen place or city. This concept is most prominent in the book of Deuteronomy, where it is one of the most important—some would say, *the* most important—innovations of the book. We find there the commandment that when the people of Israel enter the land, conquer it and settle in it, and when God grants them safety from all their enemies around (Deuteronomy 12:10), they should restrict the worship of the Lord to one place, “the site that the Lord your God will choose amidst all your tribes as His habitation, to establish His name there” (Deuteronomy 12:5).¹ In spite of the importance of this concept, the name of the place is not given in Deuteronomy; in all the other sources, however, “the place” is unequivocally Jerusalem, “the city the Lord had chosen” (1 Kings 14:21).²

1. Deuteronomy and almost all the other sources are silent regarding the mode of this choosing: how will the Lord, or how did the Lord, choose the “place”? This total silence seems to be intentional and eloquent, in itself an aspect of Deuteronomy’s overall philosophy. The absolute denunciation of all earlier places of worship also involves the rejection of all earlier forms of consecration. No actual act of “choosing the place” is suggested.

This whole complex of ideas requires some further clarification. Ancient Israel knew many holy places, sites dedicated to the God of Israel, where sacrifices and worship were conducted. This was indeed the prevalent practice in Israel, described by the biblical narratives, established by the law, and confirmed by archeological excavations. The manner in which these places were consecrated was divine revelation, which designated the place as holy: “And he built an altar there to the Lord who had appeared to him” (Genesis 12:7, 35:1).

Viewed from the perspective of the norm and practice prevalent in ancient Israel for a long time, the demand expressed in Deuteronomy may be regarded as no less than a revolution. For in Deuteronomy, worship is not merely central but absolutely exclusive: there is only one place chosen by

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God.³ Any worship outside this one place is viewed as a severe transgression of the Lord's commandment, comparable to the worst practices of the surrounding Canaanites.

The book of Kings continues in the footsteps of Deuteronomy, and nowhere refers to the question of how the Lord chose Jerusalem among all the other places on earth. Jerusalem is simply described as the "place which the Lord had chosen." The issue remains an enigma: How will the place be, or how was the place, chosen?

2. When we look at the history of Jerusalem as depicted in the Bible, it becomes clear that the concept of chosenness was not a complete innovation at the time when it suddenly occupied the center of religious thinking. Rather, it was the end product of a long process, to which historical circumstances and religious beliefs and practices contributed their part. Could we, then, begin from the point where Deuteronomy left off and answer the question of how Jerusalem became "the chosen city"?

The beginning of the process is marked by the astonishing awareness of the foreignness of Jerusalem. It remains outside the earliest traditions of Israel, and carries no historical or religious memories. The biblical traditions of the pre-history of Israel—formulated in the Bible as the period of the Patriarchs—present Jerusalem as a Canaanite city. While in itself a historical fact, suggested by Egyptian sources,⁴ its presentation in Genesis deviates from the practice of the book regarding other places and sites. We learn from Genesis that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob roamed through the land, then occupied by the Canaanites, and built altars in the Lord's honor in all the places that God appeared to them.⁵ Jerusalem, however, is not included among them. Jerusalem appears explicitly in Genesis 14, where its ruler at the time of Abraham is the Canaanite Melchizedek, described as holding the dual position of king and priest: "And Melchizedek, king of Salem,⁶ brought out bread and wine; he was a priest of God Most High. He blessed him saying: "Blessed be Abram of God Most High and blessed be God Most High who has delivered your foes into your hand." And [Abram] gave him a tenth of everything" (Genesis 14:18–20). Jerusalem lay outside the purview of the most ancient religious traditions of Israel.⁷

The foreignness of Jerusalem is revealed even more strongly for the period of the Judges by three explicit statements: Joshua 15:63; Judges 1:21; 19:10–12. Jerusalem was not part of the Israelite territory after the conquest.

3. The history of Jerusalem as an Israelite city begins with David, who conquered it in one of his first campaigns after he became king of both Judah and Israel: "All the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron, and King David made a pact with them in Hebron before the Lord. And they anointed David king over Israel. . . . The king and his men set out for Jerusalem against the Jebusites who inhabited the region. . . . David captured the stronghold of Zion; it is now the City of David" (2 Samuel 5:3–7).

After he had conquered the city, David undertook four steps: restoration and building of the city (2 Samuel 5:9); establishment of Jerusalem as his capital (2 Samuel 5:11); bringing the ark of the Lord up to Jerusalem and providing a sanctuary for it (2 Samuel 6:2–19), and beginning preparations for building the temple (2 Samuel 7; 1 Chronicles 21–29). David's considerations in undertaking these measures, as well as their meaning and implications, have been discussed by many scholars,⁸ and I will refer to them only briefly.

David's major political consideration seems to have been his wish to loosen the fetters of tribal ties. Moving to Jerusalem—which did not in fact belong to any of the tribes—signaled the weakening of his ties with the tribe of Judah, and the beginning of a new era. There were also geographical and strategic considerations. Jerusalem was conveniently located in the center of the hill-country, on the intersections of roads from north to south and east to west. It had a strategic position on a hill, surrounded on three sides by deep valleys, and had a dependable supply of water.⁹ Moreover, since it had been in the hands of the Jebusites up to this point, David could claim it as his own property. He actually calls it: “the city of David.”

While the establishment of a new capital at a major historical and political turning point is a well known phenomenon in political history, David's second step is less common and reveals his true genius. As I said before, Jerusalem was not connected with the ancient traditions of Israel, and carried no venerated historical memories. David undertook to change this situation by turning Jerusalem not merely into an Israelite city, but also into a holy city. The tactic he chose to employ was the transfer of the ark to Jerusalem.

The ark was the most sacred cultic object in the history of Israel. It was not associated with any tribe in particular but rather with the people as a whole, and its origin was traditionally associated with the people's wanderings in the wilderness (Exodus 25:10–22; Deuteronomy 10:1–5). It was the most important concrete symbol of God's presence amidst his people. By the very presence of the ark in Jerusalem, the city becomes holy and the unifying religious center of all Israel. The foundations laid by David were then built upon by Solomon, who erected the Temple as a magnificent building, and brought the ark of the Lord from its tent to the “holy of holies” inside the Temple (1 Kings 8: 1–10).¹⁰ At this time the Temple was, in fact, the king's chapel, part of the grand royal building complex in Jerusalem. However, time on the one hand, and the experience of pilgrimage on the other, had their impact, and the status of the Temple, as well as the sanctity of Jerusalem, were eventually absorbed into the people's collective consciousness.¹¹

4. The next crucial point in the history of Jerusalem occurs two hundred years later, during the reign of Hezekiah, at the end of the eighth century B.C.E. In his time, the Assyrian king Sennacherib undertook a military campaign against the kingdom of Judah, during which he captured all the fortified cities of Judah except Jerusalem. Jerusalem withstood the long and severe siege (2 Kings

18:13), and then, for one reason or another, the siege was lifted and Sennacherib returned to his country. Jerusalem was saved (2 Kings 19:7, 35).¹²

The historical and political meaning of these events cannot be overestimated: after the conquest of northern Israel about twenty years earlier (722 B.C.E.), the conquest of Jerusalem would have meant the end of Judah, and with it the end of the national entity called Israel. However, the deliverance of Jerusalem also had far-reaching and long-lasting theological ramifications. In the biblical and historical philosophies of the Bible, this deliverance inevitably meant that Jerusalem was protected by God. This self-evident theological interpretation became sharply focused and greatly highlighted in conjunction with the prophecy of Isaiah which preceded the deliverance.

Throughout the Assyrian siege, Isaiah demonstrated complete spiritual confidence. He proclaimed that the Assyrian campaign was indeed a deserved punishment for Judah, but it was temporary; Jerusalem would not be conquered (see 2 Kings 19:28, 34). The withdrawal of Sennacherib not only confirmed Isaiah's farsightedness, but turned his words into a theological maxim: Jerusalem had a unique position in the earthly world. It was indestructible, for the Lord's presence and special grace protected it from all evil.

The deliverance of Jerusalem from the Assyrian threat in the days of Hezekiah, and the contrast between its survival and the destruction of the kingdom of Israel, may be seen as the seed which would grow and flourish in later generations into a new theology of election. The full bloom of this theology is found about a hundred years later, in the reign of Josiah, at the end of the seventh century.

5. King Josiah (639–609 B.C.E.) was one of the last kings of Judah and its last great ruler. Josiah took advantage of the decline of Assyrian power, and used this short interval of political independence as an opportunity for change and expansion. The biblical story of Josiah's activity centers upon his religious actions and his most important undertaking in this area: a comprehensive cultic reform, in the eighteenth year of his rule (622 B.C.E.; 2 Kings 22–23; 2 Chronicles 34–35).¹³

The reform had two major objectives: To remove from the land every form of idolatry—an understandable step, with which I will not deal in this context—and to abolish all the sanctuaries to the Lord throughout the land, in both Judah and Israel, except the central temple in Jerusalem. As part of this comprehensive reform, Josiah defiles the shrines to the Lord in the land of Judah, discharges the priests and the other attendants of the sanctuaries, and brings them all to Jerusalem (2 Kings 23:8–9).

Josiah followed the religious philosophy of the book of Deuteronomy to the letter: worship of the God of Israel is exclusive and can be conducted only in Jerusalem! Thus, in the century between Hezekiah and Josiah a new religious philosophy came into being, and a vigorous and energetic king came upon the scene to implement it.

The underlying motives of this theology, and of Josiah's actions, are not made fully clear in the biblical story, and scholars have tried to explain them in their own terms. But whatever the reasons that brought about this religious revolution, the effects of this reform were enormous. Although such a system may seem to the observer totally unviable, contrary to human nature and man's need for God's nearness and presence, in the long run the reform did prevail. This was not the result of the religious logic of the reform or of Josiah's power, but of the concrete historical circumstances and their religious interpretation. Thirty-six years after the reform, and twenty-two years after Josiah's death, Jerusalem was conquered by the Babylonians, the land of Judah was destroyed, the Temple was burned to ashes, and many of the people were exiled. A spirit of repentance swept the people and turned the Deuteronomistic philosophy of history into a major religious force. When eventually the fortunes of the people changed, and the Persian emperors allowed the people of Judah to restore their religious life, only one sanctuary was built in the land of Judah—the Temple of Jerusalem.¹⁴

6. Very little is known about the history of Israel at the beginning of the Second Temple period under Persian rule, and our views are colored by the picture portrayed in the book of Ezra-Nehemiah. Although Ezra-Nehemiah does not abound in Deuteronomistic terminology of choosing, the exclusivity of Jerusalem seems self-evident for this book. There is complete identification between the God of Israel and Jerusalem; He is actually defined as "the God that is in Jerusalem" (Ezra 1:3).

It seems, however, that this picture does not fully represent the historical reality, and that at least at the beginning of that period, matters were more complicated. It is doubtful that Jerusalem was in fact the only sanctuary for the Lord, and that worship of the God of Israel was not performed in other places as well, either in the land of Israel or abroad.¹⁵ Against this historical background, the idea of "the chosen place" developed in two different, opposing directions. One direction was a continuous effort to strengthen the idea of the exclusivity of Jerusalem. This was done by broadening the theological basis of the "choice" and founding it on explicit traditions and additional religious concepts. The opposite direction also propagated the idea of "chosenness and exclusivity," but it focused on denying that chosenness to Jerusalem. A forceful propagator of the first direction is the book of Chronicles. The propagators of the opposite view are of course the Samaritans, for whom it is a most important religious tenet: there is indeed a "chosen place" but this place is not Jerusalem, but Shechem. The two opposing currents center on one aspect of the idea of "chosenness," which was either neglected or intentionally avoided by Deuteronomy: the circumstances in which the choice was originally made. Both sources provide answers to the question left open in Deuteronomy: how and when did God choose the "chosen place"?

The book of Chronicles insists on the election of Jerusalem in all contexts which relate to the building of the Temple, starting with the time of David. In all the parallel sections in this pericope, which the Chronicler takes from the books of Samuel and Kings, he adds phrases and passages that relate explicitly how Jerusalem was actually chosen. Chronicles borrows the story of the threshing floor of Arauna from the book of Samuel (2 Samuel 24; 1 Chronicles 21), but ends it very differently. Among the additions to the story we find that God confirmed by fire His pleasure with the altar built by David. To the words taken from 2 Samuel 24:25: "And David built there an altar to the Lord and sacrificed burnt offerings and offerings of well being," repeated verbatim in 1 Chronicles 21:26, Chronicles adds the words: "He invoked the Lord, who answered him with fire from heaven on the altar of burnt offerings." The Chronicler ends the passage with a proclamation by David: "Here will be the House of the Lord and here the altar of burnt offerings for Israel" (22:1). The place was chosen and consecrated by God's revelation in fire, and was publicly announced by David's proclamation.

The Chronicler also introduces a few changes into the story of the building of the temple. In his introduction to these chapters, the Chronicler adds a clear description of the Temple's location, absent from the book of Kings: "Then Solomon began to build the House of the Lord in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where [the Lord] had appeared to his father David, at the place which David had designated, at the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite" (2 Chronicles 3:1). According to this view, the place of the temple was chosen by God's revelation to David, but it is also the place called "Mount Moriah," connected to the period of the patriarchs and in particular to the binding of Isaac.

Then, when Solomon dedicated the altar and the temple, the Chronicler adds to the story of 1 Kings that: "When Solomon finished praying, fire descended from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the Lord filled the house. . . . All the Israelites witnessed (literally: saw) the descent of fire and the glory of the Lord on the House" (2 Chronicles 7:1-3).

The question of how the Lord chose Jerusalem receives in Chronicles an unequivocal answer: God already chose Jerusalem in the time of David, when He revealed Himself to David by the fire on the altar. It was then reaffirmed for all the people of Israel in the time of Solomon, when God's fire descended from heaven to the altar, and His glory filled the Temple. According to Chronicles, the exclusivity of Jerusalem as the place of worship was a binding principle, and a historical fact throughout the monarchical period.¹⁶

The Samaritans too take the idea of "the chosen place" for granted: there is only one place of worship of the God of Israel. Their answer, however, is diametrically opposed to that of the Chronicler. God chose "the place" at the very outset of Israel's existence, when he made the binding covenant between Himself and the people of Israel, at the revelation at Sinai.

The Samaritans introduce the choice of place into the most venerated text of God's revelation: the ten commandments. In the Samaritan Bible the tenth commandment reads as follows: "So, when the Lord your God has brought you into the land of the Canaanites which you are about to invade and occupy, you shall set up large stones, coat them with plaster and inscribe upon them all the words of this Teaching. When you cross the Jordan you shall set up these stones, about which I charge you this day, on Mount Garizim. There too you shall build an altar to the Lord your God . . . that mountain on the other side of the Jordan, beyond the west road which is in the land of the Canaanites who dwell in the Arabah, near Gilgal by the Terebinths of Moreh, near Shechem"¹⁷ (Exodus 20, after verse 14).

According to the Samaritans, the mountain of Garizim was chosen by God in His self-revelation to the people of Israel at Sinai. Following this view, the Samaritan Pentateuch systematically changes the Deuteronomic statements regarding "the place that the Lord your God will choose": in place of the Masoretic text "will choose" (יבחר) the Samaritans have "has chosen" (בחר).

The Samaritans' answer to the question of chosenness demonstrates very clearly that by the time of the schism, the idea of exclusivity was fully rooted in the people's minds.¹⁸ The rivalry between Jerusalem and Shechem had to lead to a schism because it was transferred from the political realm to the religious one: theologically speaking, it was an either-or situation—either Jerusalem or Shechem.

The concept of the "chosen place"—election which means cultic exclusivity—had enormous political and religious effects, in its time and for the future, for Judaism and for the religions that developed from it.

NOTES

1. Biblical quotations follow the version of the New Jewish Publication Society (NJPS). "The site that the Lord will choose" is mentioned twenty times in Deuteronomy, with variations. See also 12:11, 14, 18, 21, 26; 14:23, 24, 25; 15:20; 16:2, 6, 7, 11, 15, 16; 17:8, 10; 26:2; 31:11.

2. See also: 1 Kings 8:44, 48; 11:13, 32, 36; 2 Kings 21:7; 23:27; Zechariah 1:17; 2:16; 3:2; Psalms 78:68; 132:13; 2 Chronicles 6:5, 6, 34, 38; 7:12, 16; 12:1 3; 33:7.

3. It is interesting that this one place is not defined in Deuteronomy as "holy" (קדוש) but as "chosen." Although the term "holy" is found in Deuteronomy in several places, in particular in reference to the people (עם קדוש), it never applies to the place of worship. Only God's abode in heaven is described as holy: השקיפה ממעון קדשך מן השמים (Deuteronomy 26:15). The absence of the term "holy" characterizes also the revelation stories in Genesis and in Joshua-Kings; by contrast, in the P section of the Pentateuch it applies, among others, to the Tabernacle.

4. Jerusalem is mentioned already in the Execration Texts of the nineteenth-eighteenth century B.C.E., while correspondence with Jerusalem is included in the El-Amarna letters (of the fourteenth century B.C.E.), from which we also learn the name of its king, Abed-Heppa. These letters provide information about some of the historical circumstances and the relations of Jerusalem with the Egyptian authorities. See S. Abramsky, M. Avi-Yonah, "Jerusalem (Names and History)," *Encyclopedia Judaica* 9 (Jerusalem) 1971, pp. 1379–1380.

5. Abraham is connected particularly with the Negeb, in the south of the country, with the names of Hebron and Beer-Sheba, but also with Bethel and Shechem in the central hill-country (Genesis

13:18 “the terebinths of Mamre which are in Hebron”; 14:13; 18:1; 21:31; 22:19; 23; Genesis 12:6, 8, 13:3–4). Isaac is connected with the land of the Philistines and the Negeb (26:1–22, 23–33; 28:10), while Jacob is connected more with the north, and particularly with Shechem and Beth-El (Genesis 28:19; 33:18; 35:1–15). Some other names are also mentioned (Genesis 32:3: Mahanaim; 32:31: Peniel).

6. For “Salem” (שלם) as an epithet of Jerusalem see Psalms 76:3.

7. Later tradition, starting with 2 Chronicles 3:1, identified “the land of Moriah,” the place of the binding of Isaac (Genesis 22:2), with Jerusalem. This is not the case in Genesis itself. The story does not mention a specific place-name but speaks very generally about “the land of” Moriah; moreover, no connection is made between Moriah and Jerusalem. This is also true regarding 2 Samuel 24, which may be viewed to some extent as the *hagios logos* of the Temple. Cf. further below.

8. See: B. Mazar, “Jerusalem–Royal Sanctuary” and Seat of the Monarchy,” in *Biblical Israel, State and People* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1992), pp. 88–99.

9. See: E. Efrat, “Jerusalem (Geography),” *Encyclopedia Judaica* 9 (Jerusalem) 1971, pp. 1514–1516.

10. One of the epithets of the Temple is indeed: “a resting-place for the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord . . . the foot stool of our God” (1 Chronicles 28:2; also 1 Chronicles 22:19; cf. Psalms 132).

11. See the words attributed to Jeroboam upon the defection of Israel from Judah (1 Kings 12:26–29). According to this statement, Jerusalem’s position in the people’s mind had been established.

12. For a discussion of this campaign see M. Cogan and H. Tadmor, II Kings, *Anchor Bible* (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1988), pp. 223–251.

13. See: M. Weinfeld, *From Joshua to Josiah, Turning Points in the History of Israel From the Conquest of the Land Until the Fall of Judah* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1992), pp. 163–179 (Hebrew).

14. This fact is strongly emphasized by Kaufmann. See Y. Kaufmann, *The History of the Religion of Israel*, I (Jerusalem/Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1960), pp. 90–94. On the building of the second temple and its early history, see: S. Japhet, “The Temple in the Restoration Period: Reality and Ideology,” *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 43 (1991): 195–251.

15. Most known are the sanctuaries in Egypt, first in Elephantine and later the temple of Honio in Leontopolis. On these sanctuaries see briefly, M. Haran, *Temples and Temple Worship in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), pp. 46–48. In the land of Israel the Samaritan temple was in Shechem, and perhaps also the sanctuary in Bethel (2 Kings 17:28–33). See the interesting views of H. Eshel, “The Historical Background of Building Temples for the God of Israel in Bethel and Samaria Following the Destruction of the First Temple,” MA Diss., Jerusalem 1989, in Hebrew. Most interesting is the text of Malachi, which refers to the offering of “incense and oblation” to the Lord “everywhere”: “If only you would lock My doors, and not kindle fire on My altar to no purpose! I take no pleasure in you—said the Lord of Hosts—and I will accept no offering from you. For from where the sun rises to where it sets, My name is honored among the nations and everywhere incense and pure oblation are offered to My name; for My name is honored among the nations—said the Lord of Hosts” (Malachi 1:10–11).

16. On this feature in the Chronicler’s view of history see S. Japhet, *The Ideology of the Book of Chronicles and its Place in Biblical Thought* (English translation A. Barber, Frankfurt/Bern/New York/Paris: Peter Lang, 1997), pp. 202–247.

17. This text is a compilation of various biblical texts, particularly Deuteronomy 27:2 ff. (also Exodus 13:5; Deuteronomy 4:5; 11:30). The dependence is well-known, but so too are the differences between these texts, and there is no need to elaborate.

18. The date of the schism is much debated among scholars. For a summary of the views, see L. L. Grabbe, *Judaism from Cyrus to Hadrian*, II (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), pp. 503–507. Eshel regards the development of the Samaritans’ belief in the sanctity of Mount Garizim, and consequently, of the emergence of Samaritanism, as rather late. See H. Eshel, “The Samaritans in the Persian and Hellenistic Periods: The Origins of Samaritanism,” Jerusalem, Diss. 1994, in particular pp. 216–226 (Hebrew with English Summary).

Hasmonean Jerusalem: A Jewish City in a Hellenistic Orbit

LEE I. LEVINE

BY THE HASMONEAN PERIOD (CA. 160–63 B.C.E.), Jerusalem had been under Jewish hegemony for almost one thousand years. The city had come to be regarded, by Jew and non-Jew alike, as a quintessentially Jewish city. Its population was overwhelmingly Jewish, as were its leadership, calendar, and public institutions, first and foremost of which was the Temple.

In the course of the First and Second Temple periods, Jerusalem had evolved into the central, sacred site of the Jewish people. This status was not created overnight, but resulted from an ongoing process spanning many centuries. Beginning with David's decision to conquer the city and transform it into his political and religious capital, it culminated in Josiah's decision to centralize Jewish sacrificial cult in the city. Whereas beforehand it had been permissible to offer sacrifices to the God of Israel anywhere in the country, now only those sacrifices brought to the Jerusalem Temple were recognized as legitimate and sanctioned.

The centrality of the city became even more pronounced in the ensuing Second Temple period. Chronicles emphasizes God's choice of Jerusalem by relating that a fire descended from heaven onto the altar David built there (1 Chronicles 21:26; cf. 2 Samuel 24:25) and by explicitly identifying Moriah of the *'Aqedah* story with the Temple Mount (2 Chronicles 3:1). Cyrus's recognition of the city by virtue of its holy Temple was to be repeated later on by Hellenistic and Roman conquerors. Antiochus III's edict on behalf of Jerusalem upon its capture ca. 200 B.C.E. is clear testimony to this status (*Antiquities* 12, 138–144). Moreover, the transformation of the city into the capital of a substantial political kingdom, first in the days of the Hasmoneans and later under Herod, further imbued Jerusalem with a status and importance heretofore unmatched.

Parallel to this enhanced political status, Jerusalem also enjoyed a heightened religious standing. Isaiah, as noted, had already envisioned the city as a spiritual focus for all nations (2:1–4), and in the aftermath of the destruction Ezekiel describes the city as the center of the world and its name as “the Lord is there” (5:5, 48:35), while 2 Chronicles refers to the Lord as “the God of Jerusalem” (32:19). Deutero-Isaiah (48:2, 52:1) and Nehemiah (11:1) extend the realm of holiness beyond the Temple (Isaiah 27:13; Jeremiah 31:22) to

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embrace all of Jerusalem, while Zechariah takes this one step further and includes all of Judaea as well (2:14–17). Centuries later, these ideas were elaborated in the *Letter of Aristeas* (83), *Jubilees* (8:17–19), as well as by Josephus (*War* 3, 52) and Philo (*Embassy* 37, 281). During the Second Temple period, the twin concept of eschatological and heavenly Jerusalem made its appearance (Enoch 85–90) and became even more prominent in the generation following the destruction of the Second Temple (4 Ezra; 2 Baruch; cf. also Revelations 21–22; Hebrews 12).

The Jewish Dimension of Second Temple Jerusalem

The Second Temple period witnessed continued efforts at defining Jerusalem as an essentially Jewish city by emphasizing its uniqueness and particularity. Ezra and Nehemiah's attempts to distinguish the city and its population from the surrounding world was a religious policy that reflected Judaea's geographic and political isolation; this policy would be continued by various leaders and groups down to the end of the Second Temple era. We have the testimonies of a number of Greek writers from the early Hellenistic period for the relative success of this policy. Hecataeus of Abdera, for instance, described the uniqueness of Jerusalem, its Temple, and people, as well as the success of Jewish society in preserving its ancestral traditions. Ben Sira advocates a similar posture, and the second-century Hasidim in the time of Judah Maccabee seem to have followed an agenda with an intensive Jewish focus.¹

Moreover, during these three centuries, between Ezra and Nehemiah on the one hand and the Hasmoneans on the other, a number of practices and literary works evolved that clearly expressed this particularistic social and religious thrust. This proclivity was expressed early on in a variety of ways, from banning of foreign merchants from the city on the Sabbath, to emphasizing the use of Hebrew, to driving out foreign wives.² The division of the Jewish population into priestly *mishmarot* and lay *ma'amadot*, with semi-annual obligations in the Temple, also seems to have evolved at this time, as did a series of halakhic requirements, such as bringing new produce to Jerusalem or spending the "second tithe" in the city four times every seven years.³ The emergence of apocalyptic literature in the third century is a further expression of Jewish particularism, as was the newly established centrality of the Torah in Jewish religious life, a centrality which found expression in a regular communal-reading framework which evolved at some point during this period.⁴

This introversive focus on the Jewish body polity was given a dramatic boost in the mid-second century, with the ascendancy of the Hasmoneans and the establishment of a sovereign state boasting ambitious territorial designs. Among the changes effected, the following can be mentioned:

(1) The Hasmoneans radically altered the geographical concept of Eretz-Israel to include now almost all of the territory west of the Jordan River and large tracts to its east; for the 400-or-so years beforehand, the area included

only the region around Jerusalem, which was more or less contiguous with the Persian administrative region, Yehud.

(2) With the successful conquests came the ideology that the Jews under Hasmonean hegemony were, in fact, reclaiming their ancestral homeland and were obliged to eliminate all pagan worship. This led to the destruction of pagan shrines and, at times, to the death or exile of native populations (e.g., 1 Maccabees 13:43–53). It was at this time that the institution of conversion first made its appearance in a Jewish context; the Hasmoneans forced conversion upon the Idumeans in the south and the Itureans in the north.⁵

(3) This period witnessed an enhanced prominence of the Temple in Jewish life. The Hasmoneans came to power as defenders of the Temple and its purity from foreign cults, and this achievement played a central role in their court propaganda, as indicated by 2 Maccabees and the letters prefacing that book. Brief references in 1 Maccabees and Josephus indicate that each and every Hasmonean ruler devoted energy and monies to improving and strengthening the Temple and its surroundings.

(4) With the campaigns to ban idolatry and reemphasize the Temple's prominence came a greater emphasis on matters of ritual purity within Jewish society. This new focus found expression in many of the halakhic decisions ascribed to the early Pharisees and the Qumran community. In the material culture, this emphasis is evident in the development and use of ritual baths (*miqva'ot*), along with the extensive use of stone utensils that were considered unsusceptible to impurity. This tendency is further emphasized by the almost exclusive use of local (as against imported) ware in this era, and by the much more frequent recourse to using the ashes of the red heifer from this time forward. According to the Mishnah, the ashes of the red heifer were intended for purification from corpse impurity; this rare sacrifice was reportedly offered only five times (another tradition states seven times) from the Hasmonean period onward, i.e., in the last two hundred years of the Second Temple period. In the previous millennium, it is noted that this sacrifice was made only twice (Mishnah Parah 3, 5).

(5) Jewish art underwent a radical change at this time and was now characterized by the studious avoidance of any figural representation, human or animal. Up to this point such depictions were well known in Jewish circles, from the cherubs over the holy ark and the lions of Solomon's throne to the figurines found in Israelite settlements and the human and animal images on Yehud coins from Persian and Hellenistic Jerusalem. However, commencing with the Hasmoneans and continuing for a period of some 300 years, no human or animal representations were to be found in Judaea. Exceptions to this rule exist, but they are few and far between.⁶

(6) Finally the emergence of Jewish sects—Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes (as well as the Qumran sect)—each with its own particular religious agenda, is a further indication of a more concerted Jewish emphasis at this time, at least within certain circles.

The Hellenistic Dimension of Hasmonean Jerusalem

Thus, understanding the Jewish component of Second Temple Jerusalem is necessary, but not sufficient, to an understanding of the city and its workings. Hellenistic culture was another force at work in the wake of, and even before, Alexander's conquests of the East, and it was to shape the city in no less profound ways than the Jewish dimension. The cultural message of the Hellenistic world was radically different from the Jerusalem of Ezra and Nehemiah. Alexander had married a Persian princess and compelled much of his army to wed Persian women. His message here was loud and clear: isolation, insulation, and estrangement were to be rejected; a meeting of cultures, symbiosis, synthesis, and even syncretism were the order of the day. This, of course, is a far cry from the coercive mass-divorce from non-Jewish spouses imposed by Ezra and Nehemiah on part of the Jerusalem population.

Moreover, what had been of peripheral significance before Alexander became much more central after his conquest; major changes in the Hellenistic period altered the face of the city dramatically. The impact of Hellenism on the Near East in general, and on Judaea and Jerusalem in particular, was considerable. From almost the very beginning of this era, we find signs of Jerusalem's participation in the life of the wider Hellenistic world, as in its diplomatic relations with Sparta that developed in the third and second centuries B.C.E., or in its use of imported Rhodian wine, as attested by the discovery of hundreds of stamped amphora handles dating from the mid-third to mid-second centuries B.C.E. Several books written or edited in the third century B.C.E., e.g., Ecclesiastes (*Qohelet*) and the Song of Songs, appear to reflect either Hellenistic genres (in the case of the latter) or the questioning of traditional Jewish values resulting from the impact of Hellenistic ideas (in the case of the former). In addition, a number of books appear to have been written in opposition to certain hellenizing tendencies, as, for example, *Ben Sira* and *Jubilees*, although even these exhibit a certain measure of outside influence.⁷

The *pièce de résistance* of Judaeen Hellenization, and the most dramatic development of all, occurred in 175 B.C.E., when the high priest Jason converted Jerusalem into a Greek *polis* replete with *gymnasium* and *ephebeum* (2 Maccabees 4). Whether this step represents the culmination of a 150-year process of Hellenization within Jerusalem in general, or whether it was the initiative of only a small coterie of Jerusalem priests, with no wider ramifications, has been debated for decades.⁸ The answer most probably lies somewhere between these two polar positions. In any event, Jason's move constituted a bold step in the city's adaptation to the wider world, a process that would be interrupted—albeit only temporarily—by the persecutions of Antiochus IV and the resultant Maccabean revolt.

A further stage in the Hellenization process took place in the ensuing period. The motivation of the Hasmonean revolt has often been misunderstood. It has been contended that this revolt came in protest to the process and

progress of Hellenization in Judaea, but this is patently not the case. The Maccabees revolted in response to the persecutions imposed by the king; this was a most exceptional policy for an enlightened Hellenistic king. It seems to have been an extreme step that may have been motivated by the most unusual of circumstances. Both E. Bickerman and M. Hengel have claimed that this was indeed the case, and that extreme Jewish hellenizers were actually the ones who instigated the persecution.⁹ Moreover, the Hasmoneans themselves quickly adopted Hellenistic mores; they instituted holidays celebrating military victories (Nicanor Day on the 13th of Adar), as did the Greeks; they signed treaties with Rome and forged close alliances with the upper strata of Jerusalem society, whose hellenized proclivities—as those of the Hasmoneans themselves (see below)—are attested by names such as Alexander, Diodorus, Apollonius, Eupolemus, Numenius, Antiochus, Jason, Antipater, and Aeneas.¹⁰

In the subsequent period of Hasmonean rule (141–63 B.C.E.), instances of Hellenization within Jerusalem became much more commonplace. The document in 1 Maccabees 14 recording the public appointment of Simon as ethnarch, high priest, and *strategos* is written in a style strikingly reminiscent of documents from the Hellenistic world. The structure of this declaration, the extensive arguments invoked to justify and explain such appointments, the use of purple robes and gold ornaments by the Hasmonean ruler, the dating of an era commencing with Simon's appointment, and, finally, recording the text of this document on bronze tablets and placing them in a prominent place in the Temple area and in the (Temple?) treasury are all elements borrowed directly from well-known Hellenistic practice.

Beginning with the second generation, the Hasmoneans began adopting Greek names in addition to their Hebrew ones: John Hyrcanus I (134–104 B.C.E.), Aristobulus I (104–103 B.C.E.), Alexander Jannaeus (103–76 B.C.E.), Salome Alexandra (76–67 B.C.E.), Aristobulus II (67–63 B.C.E.), Hyrcanus II (63–40 B.C.E.), and, finally, Antigonos (40–37 B.C.E.). Hellenization in the Hasmonean court is likewise reflected by the hiring of foreign mercenaries and, more poignantly, by the assumption of royalty by Aristobulus and Alexander Jannaeus. Even more telling in this regard is the sole rule of a queen, as was the case with Salome Alexandra. This smooth and unchallenged succession was very likely facilitated by contemporary Ptolemaic practice.

Several burial monuments and graves discovered in Hasmonean Jerusalem similarly reflect a significant appropriation of Hellenistic forms. The two principal remains of such funerary monuments, the priestly B'nei Hezir tomb from the Qidron Valley in the eastern part of the city, and Jason's tomb (also probably belonging to a priestly family) in the west, in what is known today as the Rehavia neighborhood, were both built in typical Hellenistic fashion—the former with its facade in classic Doric style (columns, pilasters, and frieze), the latter with its single Doric column and pyramid-type monument. Both tombs feature *kukhim* (or loculi—rectangular niches cut perpendicularly in the wall for primary burials), a burial arrangement that reached Judaea from Alexandria

and Palestine's southern coastal region (i.e., Marisa). The tomb of Jason features scenes of merchant and war ships, a gazelle, as well as a series of menorah graffiti (the latter depiction appearing in Jewish art for the first time). Both of these tombs feature a variety of inscriptions, one in Hebrew in the B'nei Hezir tomb, and Greek and Aramaic ones in Jason's tomb.¹¹

The coins minted by the Hasmoneans are a fascinating example of cultural synthesis. Hellenistic and Jewish traditions meet on these tiny bronze coins. As with the earlier mintage, the issuance of coins for economic and political purposes reflects the contemporary practice of both established kingdoms, as well as of newly established political entities seeking recognition and legitimacy. While only inscriptions in ancient Hebrew script (the First Temple precursor of the Aramaic square script introduced into Jewish society in the Persian period) appear on the coinage of Hyrcanus I and Aristobulus I, Greek inscriptions appear regularly in the time of Alexander Jannaeus. These inscriptions bear the Greek name of the ruler as well as his Greek title, i.e., βασιλευς (= king); the Hebrew inscriptions, by contrast, bear the ruler's Hebrew name (Yohanan, Judah, Jonathan, Mattathias) as well as the title "high priest" or "king." On occasion, these bilingual inscriptions appear on either side of the same coin.¹²

The Hasmonean rulers thus appear to have lived comfortably within the Hellenistic and Jewish worlds, and this is the message they wished to convey to their people via one of the most public vehicles at their disposal. In a similar vein, the Phoenician coins from this period also exhibited native symbols together with Phoenician and Greek legends. Thus, the Hasmonean numismatic evidence is singularly significant on two counts: it reflects the vision and policy of those who ruled, while the message contained therein was aimed at the population at large for whom these coins were made.

Moreover, the symbols appearing on these coins were, with rare exception, borrowed from the surrounding Hellenistic world: anchors, cornucopiae, a wheel or star design, and floral representations. However, in this regard the Hasmonean rulers introduced one very unusual dimension: no images whatsoever of living beings—either animal or human—appear on any of their coins. Thus, the artistic and epigraphical components of the coins minted in Jerusalem under Hasmonean auspices reveal a fascinating symbiosis of Jewish and Hellenistic elements, reflecting the desire of the Hasmoneans to straddle both worlds and integrate them. This thrust is reflected in the archeological finds from the Hasmonean palaces at Jericho as well. There we find, side by side with the large swimming pool and pavilion, the latter in Doric style and following the most sophisticated of Hellenistic aristocratic tastes, a series of ritual baths (*miqva'ot*), reflecting the Hasmoneans' priestly commitment to maintaining their ritual purity with regularity.

Other evidence from Hasmonean society, though limited, likewise points in the direction of Jewish and Hellenistic symbiosis. Even a book as hostile to the Jewish Hellenizers and their reforms as 2 Maccabees—written

towards the end of the second century B.C.E.—unconsciously reflects a certain ambivalence. 2 Maccabees was the first to use the terms “Judaism” (2:21; 8:1; 14:38) and “Hellenism” (4:13) as contrasting values and countercultural forces. Yet, the book itself was written in Greek, patterned in the tradition of Greek “pathetic” historiography, and borrowed Greek literary motifs in its narratives. This was not the only such case in the literary sphere. At about the same time, the Greek translation of the book of Esther utilized the finest of Greek linguistic and stylistic techniques, especially in the additions to the Hebrew text which focused on particularistic values, emphasizing the chasm between Greek and Jew (i.e., between Haman and Mordecai). It is explicitly stated that this translation was carried out in Jerusalem.

Thus, far from stifling Hellenistic influence, Hasmonean rule was actually catalytic. To maintain diplomatic relations, support a bureaucracy, and develop a military force, Greek language and ways had to be learned. As Bickerman has aptly remarked with regard to Hellenistic native rulers who took over in the wake of the Seleucid collapse: “Cosmopolitanism was the price of independence.”¹³

NOTES

1. *Hecataeus*: M. Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism* (3 vols.; Jerusalem: Israel Academy, 1974–84), I, pp. 20–44; Ben-Sira 1:1 and throughout; *Hasidim*: 1 Maccabees 2:42; 7: 12–17.
2. Ezra 9–10; Nehemiah 13.
3. Mishnah Ta'anit 4, 2–3; S. Safrai, “Religion in Everyday Life,” in *The Jewish People in the First Century*, edited by S. Safrai and M. Stern, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974–76), II, pp. 817–828.
4. *Apocalyptic literature*: M. Stone, *Scriptures, Sects and Visions* (Cleveland: Collins, 1980), pp. 27–35; *Torah-reading*: L. Levine, “The Nature and Origin of the Palestinian Synagogue Reconsidered,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 115 (1996): 438–441.
5. Josephus, *Antiquities* 13, 257–258, 318.
6. N. Avigad, *Beth She'arim*, III (New Brunswick: Rutgers, 1976), pp. 277–278.
7. M. Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974), I, pp. 107ff.
8. For different views on this question, see E. Bickerman, *From Ezra to the Last of the Maccabees* (New York: Schocken, 1962), pp. 93–111; V. Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1961), pp. 117–203.
9. In addition to Bickerman, *From Ezra to the Last of the Maccabees*, see Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, pp. 255–309.
10. See, for example, 1 Maccabees 8:17; 12:16, 14:22, 24; Josephus, *Antiquities* 13, 260; 14, 146.
11. E. Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period*, 13 vols. (New York: Pantheon, 1953–68), I, pp. 79–84.
12. Y. Meshorer, *Ancient Jewish Coinage*, 2 vols. (Dix Hills, NY: Amphora, 1982), I, pp. 35–98.
13. E. Bickerman, *Jews in the Greek Age* (Cambridge: Harvard, 1988), p. 302.

Jerusalem as the Omphalos of the World: On the History of a Geographical Concept

PHILIP S. ALEXANDER

JERUSALEM HAS EVOKED MANY IMAGES BUT NONE IS perhaps more vivid and abiding than that of the Holy City as the center and navel of the earth. A series of mediaeval Christian maps, of which the Hereford *mappa mundi* is perhaps the best known (Figure 1, p. 148), has given this idea graphic form by depicting the world as a circular landmass surrounded by Ocean, with Jerusalem at its middle, the circle of its walls echoing the line of the earth's rim and hinting at the city's perfection and spiritual supremacy. Often reproduced, the symbolism of these charming artifacts has passed into popular consciousness. But where and when did this concept originate, and what message or messages has it been used to convey?

The first clear reference to Jerusalem as the navel of the earth occurs in the Book of Jubilees, a retelling of the Book of Genesis composed in Hebrew in Palestine in Second Temple times. The importance of Jerusalem, its favored location, even its centrality within its region, are certainly mentioned in earlier Jewish texts, but it is only in the second century B.C.E. in Jubilees that we find for the first time a clear cartographic image of the world as a whole, with Jerusalem placed at its center and called "the navel" of the earth. The relevant passage comes from Jubilees' treatment of the division of the world among the Sons of Noah after the Flood: "And he (Noah) knew that the Garden of Eden is the holy of holies and the Lord's dwelling place, and Mount Sinai the center of the desert, and Mount Zion the center of the navel of the earth: these three were created as holy places facing each other."¹

There are problems with this text, and unfortunately neither the Greek nor the Hebrew survives to help us solve them. The phrase "the center of the navel of the earth" seems a curious tautology and we might suspect that "navel" has been added secondarily, perhaps in the Greek or the Ethiopic. Why not simply "center of the earth," matching "center of the desert"? Zion's designation as the "navel" does, I would suggest, have a point and was probably in the original text. It serves to rank Sinai and Zion. Both are "holy," both are "centers," but whereas Sinai is only the center of the desert, Zion is the center of the world and its *omphalos*. The resonant epithet *omphalos* establishes Zion's higher status.²

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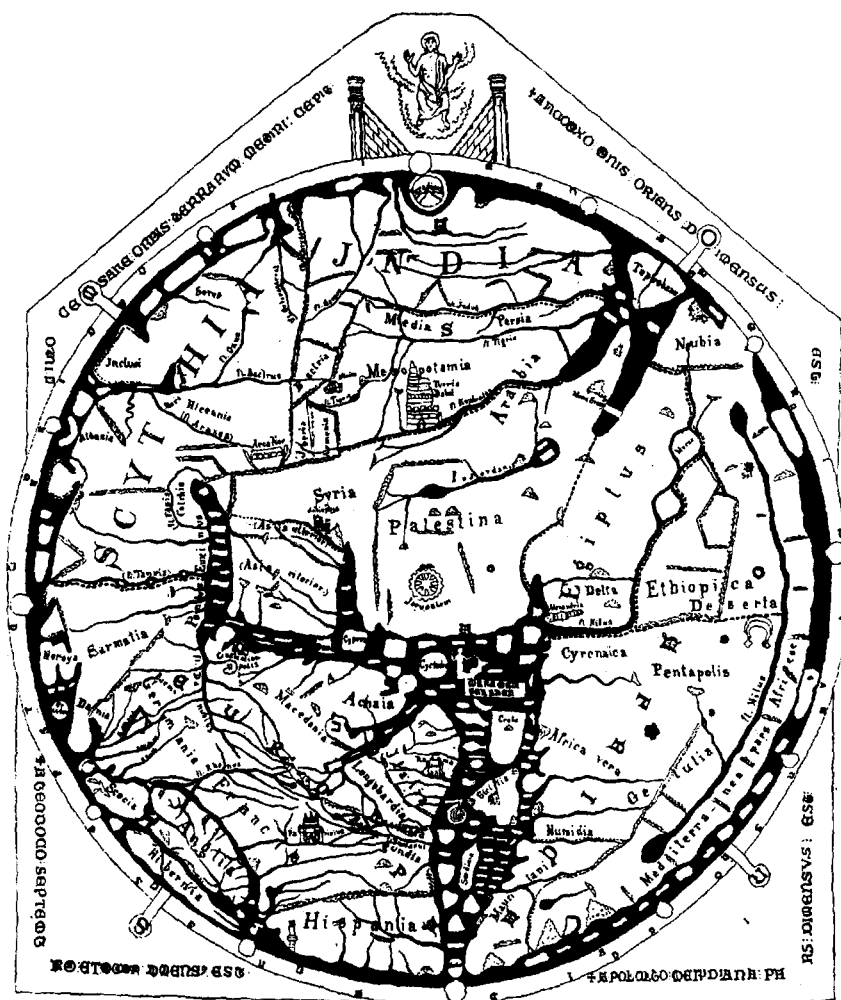


Figure 1: The Hereford Mappa Mundi (after the simplified hand copy in K. Miller, *Mappae Mundi*, Heft IV [J. Roth: Stuttgart 1896], p. 2)

The geographical centrality of Jerusalem is presented by the author of Jubilees in a very concrete way. His treatment of the Table of the Nations in Genesis 10 projects a remarkably vivid *imago mundi*, one so coherent and cartographic that it probably once existed as a drawn map (Figure 2, p. 150). The world is visualized as a more or less circular land mass surrounded by the waters of ocean, its disc bisected east-west by a median running through the Garden of Eden and the Straits of Gibraltar, and north-south by a median running through Mount Zion and Mount Sinai. The medians intersect at Zion, which stands, consequently, at the center of the earth.³

What exactly does the author of Jubilees mean by asserting that Zion is the “navel” of the earth? We must be careful not to read too much into his use of the word. The concept of the center of the earth plays an important role in many religious world views and is associated with an impressive, and remarkably constant, set of mythological ideas. But it would be wrong to assume that every time the phrase “the navel of the earth” occurs, it invokes automatically this whole nexus of ideas. There may be distant echoes of mythology in Jubilees (note, for example, that the “navel” is a mountain), but fundamentally Jubilees is not expressing mythology. Indeed its sober geography is remarkable for its *absence* of mythology and stands in striking contrast to the fantastic geography of its contemporary, the First Book of Enoch. The Jubilees’ reference to Zion as “the navel of the earth” must be set in the context of the message of the Jubilees world map as a whole, and in that setting it can be seen first and foremost as a political statement. It is part of the anti-Greek political rhetoric of the Jubilees *mappa mundi*.

I would suggest that when the author of Jubilees refers to Zion as the navel of the earth, he does not have earlier Jewish or Semitic ideas primarily in mind, but rather contemporary Greek claims that Delphi is the *omphalos* of the world. There were a number of *omphaloi* in Greece, but Delphi was the *omphalos* par excellence. Its status as such was enshrined in national folklore and literature, and the *omphalos* stone at Delphi was a major tourist attraction featured on coins. Delphi was a pan-Hellenic shrine, and doubtless its claim that it was the navel of the earth was intended to support its national status. Its role within Greek religion can be compared to the role of the Jerusalem sanctuary within Judaism. There is every possibility, then, that the author of Jubilees could have known this Greek tradition.

Early Ionian geographers took up this popular Greek mythology and gave it cartographic form. Though the details of the early Ionian maps are obscure, it is probable that they represented the *oikoumene* as a circular disc, that Delphi was the mid-point, and that the landmass of the world was divided into three continents—Europe, Asia, and Libya (= Africa). This image of the world apparently persisted, largely resistant to advances in geographical knowledge, as the world map of educated Greeks well into the current era. The author of Jubilees took this standard Ionian map and recast it onto a biblical frame. He correlated the three sons of Noah with the three Ionian continents—Japhet =

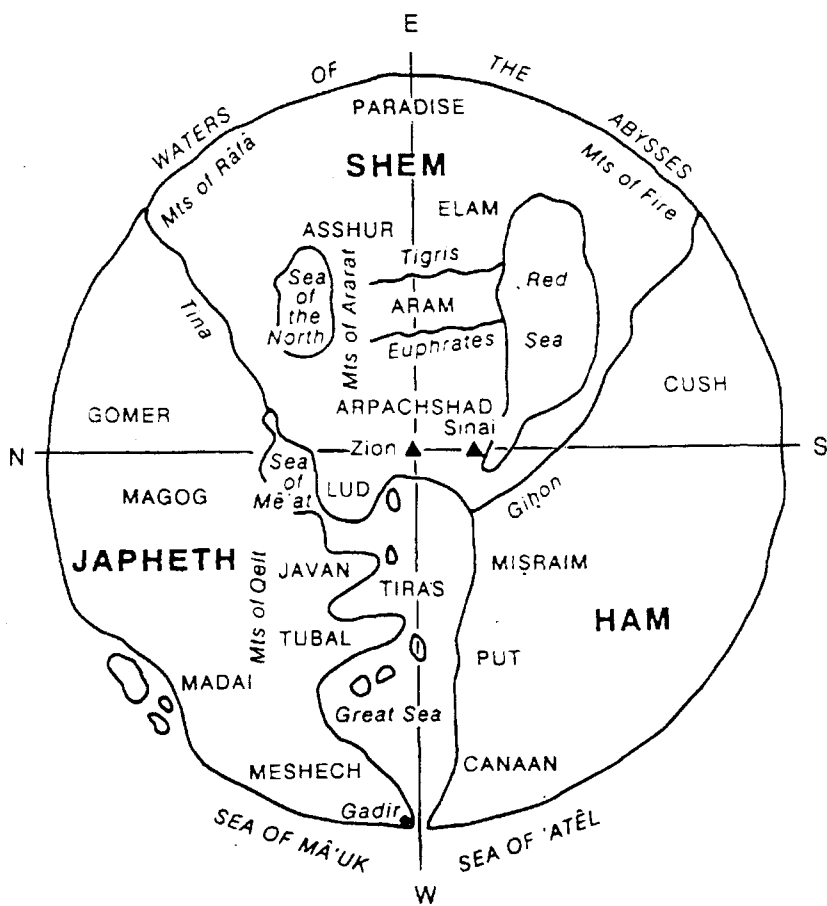


Figure 2: The Jubilees Mappa Mundi (after P. S. Alexander, *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, II, p. 982)

Europe, Shem = Asia and Ham = Libya—using the rivers Nile and Don (as did certain Ionian cartographers) to demarcate their respective territories. And he relocated the *omphalos* of the world from Delphi to Jerusalem.⁴

A consideration of the general program of the Jubilees map confirms the impression that its assertion of the centrality of Jerusalem is essentially polemical and political. We must recall the historical setting of the book. Jubilees dates to the mid-second century B.C.E. Its appearance coincided with the Hasmonean revolution, which caused a profound intensification of religious life in Palestinian Judaism. The Hasmoneans redefined the concept of Jewish territoriality, the relationship of Israel to the Diaspora, and possibly even the concept of what it meant to be a Jew. They re-drew the political map of the Middle East in two ways. First, they established the independence of the Jewish territory from Greek hegemony. Second, they expanded *Jewish* hegemony over neighboring non-Jewish territory and created a greater Israel. Jubilees attempts to give *de jure* justification for both these *de facto* developments. Note, first, its treatment of the Greeks on its world map. Javan (Greece) is a son of Japhet, and so his patrimony, according to the Jubilees schema, belongs to Europe, which ends at the Bosphorus. The Greeks, therefore, have no right of residence in Asia, and in usurping land there they are breaking the solemn agreement entered into by the sons of Noah after the Flood. Positing Jerusalem as the *omphalos* of the world is of a piece with this: it is a political gesture of great symbolic significance.⁵

Jubilees also seems to have tried to underpin the legitimacy of the territorial expansion of the Hasmonean state. In this context its treatment of Canaan is noteworthy. As a son of Ham, Canaan had to be assigned on the Jubilees schema a patrimony in Africa (the area round Carthage was cleverly chosen for him).⁶ However, in migrating from Ararat after the Flood Canaan saw the so-called “Land of Canaan,” liked it and seized it, thus violating the covenant between the sons of Noah. The “Land of Canaan” was, in fact, allotted to Arpachshad, the ancestor of Abraham. We have here a polemical reversal of the “Canaanite” “Joshua the brigand” traditions, which claimed that it was the Jews who had usurped the Land.⁷

The author of Jubilees used the Medes as a foil to the Canaanites. The Medes, as sons of Japhet, were assigned territory in Europe—the British Isles, in fact—but having migrated to their patrimony they did not like it (the weather may have been a problem), and so they returned to the Middle East and settled in the allotment of Shem. There was, however, a difference. The Medes occupied their new territory amicably, by negotiation and agreement. This story about the Medes is otherwise unknown. The author of Jubilees probably made it up as a telling contrast to the violence of the Canaanites. Maps, even modern scientifically surveyed maps, are ideological constructs. What features are selected for representation, how they are named, the choice of meridians, the projections used, and the resultant distortions of size and relationship are not value free, but often involve political statements. The Jubilees map is no

exception. It was, arguably, propaganda for the Hasmoneans and embodied their political aspirations in much the same way as Marcus Agrippa's "map" erected in the Forum at Rome embodied Augustus's vision of the Roman world order.⁸

I would like now to consider the question of whether Jerusalem or any other locality is referred to in the Bible as "the navel" of the earth. The expression *tabbur ha-'aretz*, applied to Mount Gerizim in Judges 9:37 and to Jerusalem in Ezekiel 38:12, has certainly been given this sense, ever since the Septuagint rendered *tabbur* as *omphalos*. But it is very doubtful whether this translation is historically correct. The contexts of both references are vague, and it is hard to see why such strong, metaphorical language would have been used. It is more likely, as Shemaryahu Talmon has suggested, that *tabbur* has a neutral, geographical sense, perhaps something like "plateau," or "rounded hill."⁹ Moreover, mythological motifs normally associated with the navel of the earth—for example, that some physical feature (a rock or a mountain) marks the spot from which the earth grew—are also not prominent in the Bible. These ideas are found in Babylonia and Egypt, but they are not obvious in ancient Hebrew literature.

I know of only two sources that may plausibly be seen as anticipating Jubilees. The first is 1 Enoch 26:1, where, in his cosmographical account of his world tour, Enoch says: "I was transported to the middle of the earth, and I saw a blessed place, in which were trees and saplings surviving and burgeoning from a felled tree." The "blessed place" here, as in 27:1, is the land of Israel, and the place at the center of the earth is Jerusalem, an unmistakable topography of which follows, though in keeping with the fictional setting of the narrative the name Jerusalem itself is not used. This passage in 1 Enoch belongs to the Book of the Watchers, which was probably redacted in the second half of the third century B.C.E.—that is, earlier than Jubilees. Given that the author of Jubilees unquestionably knew the Enochic literature, we may well conclude that he knew this passage of 1 Enoch. We are certainly getting close to Jubilees' position, but we are still not quite there. It is one thing to say that Jerusalem is the *middle* of the world and another to say that it is the *navel* of the earth, and to realize this assertion in clear cartographic form. The latter implies the former, but not vice versa.

The other possibly antecedent source is the Septuagint, which, as we have already noted, rendered *tabbur* in Judges and in Ezekiel by the Greek *omphalos*. In the latter text there is a link with Jerusalem. However, we cannot be sure whether the Greek translations of these two books pre-date or post-date Jubilees. The rendering of *tabbur* as *omphalos* is striking and full of potential. It is probable that the Septuagint here, as often elsewhere, is reflecting Palestinian Jewish exegetical tradition. The word *tabbur*, it should be recalled, occurs only twice in the Hebrew Bible and its sense is very uncertain. This uncertainty may have been exploited already in the late Second Temple period, and Ezekiel 38:12 used as a convenient Biblical "peg" on which to hang the doctrine of

Jerusalem as the navel of the earth. The Septuagint reflects this Palestinian tradition. In other words the equation *tabbur* = *omphalos* in Ezekiel 38:12 is not a distinctive Alexandrian invention, but represents Palestinian exegesis—the same Palestinian exegesis as is implied by the Book of Jubilees.

To sum up: I would suggest that the doctrine of Jerusalem as the navel of the earth can be traced back no earlier than the Hasmonean revolution of the second century B.C.E. It is first clearly attested in the Book of Jubilees, whose author used it for polemical purposes to support aspects of the political propaganda of the Hasmonean State.

Once launched the idea had a long and vigorous life. I shall conclude by offering some notes on its later career in both Christianity and Judaism. First, the Christian tradition. Though explicit statements occur from time to time in Christian writers asserting the geographical centrality of Jerusalem and calling it the *omphalos* of the earth, it is Christian cartography that expresses this idea most powerfully. This brings us back to the Hereford *mappa mundi*. Even at a glance the similarity of the Hereford map to the reconstructed Jubilees map is striking. Is this accidental? I would argue not: a convincing line of transmission can, in fact, be constructed linking the Hereford map direct to Jubilees.

We know that the author or creator of the Hereford map was one Richard of Holdingham and that it was drawn, probably at Lincoln, in the late thirteenth century, though it was taken almost immediately to Hereford, where it has remained to the present day.¹⁰ It belongs to a collection of maps that show a strong family likeness. These include both the large, detailed images like the Hereford *mappa mundi*, and the little T-O and T-Y maps, which are probably stylized pictograms or logos created by scribes who were daunted by the challenge of copying the complex, full-scale map. P. D. A. Harvey argues that this whole group of *mappae mundi* belongs to “a single, much ramified tradition which must go back to the Roman period,” at least to the fifth century.¹¹ He suggests that the original was a Roman map “measured” and “reasonably accurate,” “showing coastal outlines, mountains, rivers, towns and boundaries of provinces,” which has become more and more garbled with successive copying. He raises the question of the possible relationship between this original Roman map and the Marcus Agrippa map, set up in Rome on the orders of Augustus and based on a survey of the empire initiated, according to tradition, by Julius Caesar. He notes that Dilke is in favor of such a link, whereas Brodersen is not, because he believes that the Agrippan map was not in fact an image but a written text.¹²

Parts of Harvey’s tradition-history are plausible, but parts are not. That the ancestor of the Hereford family of maps goes back at least to the fifth century is a conclusion demanded by the basic stemmatics of the manuscripts. But that the ancestor-map was some sort of official Roman world map, based on information derived from the efficient Roman methods of surveying, seems to me to be totally off-target. In fact I would suggest that Harvey and other historians of cartography are guilty of naively misreading the Hereford map.

The Hereford map, and the others like it, were never meant to be “real” geography. Their significance was symbolic and theological right from the start. The Hereford map was so seriously out of joint with the geographical knowledge of its day that it cannot have been intended to be taken literally. Educated people, as Harvey correctly observes, already accepted by the thirteenth century that the world was not a flat disc but a globe, and many would have subscribed to the theory that in the southern hemisphere lay a continent matching our own, the *terra incognita* or *australis*, cut off from northern lands by the burning and impassable tropics.¹³ This *terra australis* has actually been added to the Beatus *mappa mundi*, thus destroying its symmetry. There is surprisingly little contemporary information in the Hereford map. Its image was already antiquated when it was produced. It is a survival from an earlier age, cherished more for theological than for strictly geographical reasons. It was not meant to function like a modern school atlas to inform people about the “real” world, but as a stylized visual aid to assist pious meditation and reflection.

The Hereford map belongs primarily to a tradition of Christian symbolic and mythical geography for which the real world was of little moment. Jerusalem was central to this geography, but this “Jerusalem” was not strongly identified with the physical city in the land of Palestine. In certain Christian sources the physical Jerusalem does indeed stand at the center of the physical world.¹⁴ A widespread Byzantine tradition puts the *omphalos* in Jerusalem, though significantly, in contrast to Jewish tradition, it locates it precisely in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and not on the Temple Mount. Christian and Jewish geography thus drew quite different maps of the same small geographical space. However, for most Christian writers Jerusalem was a spiritual entity which the Christian could experience anywhere. Other great cities, Rome, Constantinople, Aachen, could become “Jerusalem.” “Jerusalem” could even be created in one’s local church by the erection of stations of the cross and of “calvaries.” Ambivalence towards the Land of Israel goes back to earliest Christianity. The spiritualization of “Jerusalem” is found already in the New Testament: Paul in Galatians 4:25–26 regards the metropolis of the Church as being, not the “present Jerusalem” which is “in slavery with her children,” but the “Jerusalem above” which is free. Against this background to find fault with the cartography of the Hereford map is rather misplaced, and involves a misjudgment of its purpose and the nature of its geography.

The ancestor of the Hereford map was probably similar in outline to the Hereford map itself. The roots of this image lie not in Roman “scientific” cartography, but in a symbolic Christian world-map originating in the east. This early Christian map was in turn more or less identical to the Jubilees map and may well have been descended from it. It should be borne in mind that Jubilees circulated in a Greek version in the Greek east and is quoted by a number of Byzantine scholars.¹⁵ I would suggest, then, that a plausible case can be made for the descent of the Hereford map from the Jubilees map. Jubilees

represents the *fons et origo* of an *imago mundi* which prevailed in Christian Europe almost down to the time of Columbus.

Finally some remarks on later Jewish tradition. Jewish-Greek literature yields a few interesting references to the centrality of Jerusalem. Philo in his *Legatio ad Gaium* (§294), claims that Jerusalem is “situated in the center of the world.” Josephus in the *Bellum* (3:51–52) defines Judea as stretching from the River Jordan to Jaffa and writes, “the city of Jerusalem lies at its very center, and for this reason it has sometimes, not inaptly, been called the ‘navel’ of the country.” A similar tradition is echoed earlier in the *Letter of Aristeas* (83), where it says that Jerusalem is “situated in the center of the land of Judah on a high and exalted mountain (cf. Isaiah 2:2).”

But the most significant developments of the idea are to be found in Rabbinic texts. The *locus classicus* is in the *Tanhuma* to Leviticus (*Qedoshim* 10, ed. Buber IV, p.78):

As the navel is in the middle of the person, so is Eretz Israel the navel of the world, as it is written, “That dwell in the navel of the earth” (Ezekiel 38:12). Eretz Israel is located in the center of the world, Jerusalem in the center of Eretz Israel, the Temple in the center of Jerusalem, the *heikhal* in the center of the Temple, the ark in the center of the *heikhal* and in front of the *heikhal* is the *’even shetiyyah* from which the world was founded.

What is striking about the Rabbinic traditions is how they testify to the re-mythologization of the concept of the navel of the earth. I argued that in the Book of Jubilees there is no sign of mythology: the navel of the earth is a geo-political concept used to locate Jerusalem on the terrestrial plane and to assert its political importance. In the Rabbinic sources, however, the original mythological associations of the idea come flooding back. The mythology is clear in the passage from the Buber *Tanhuma* quoted above. Jerusalem has cosmogonic significance. It is the first created place from which the rest of the world grew outward concentrically. The “navel” is linked with the *’even shetiyyah*, a stone or rock supposedly located within the Temple that marked the exact spot from which the world developed like a fetus from the umbilical cord.¹⁶ Related to this may be the tradition that Adam was created from earth taken from the Temple Mount. The original thought was probably that it was appropriate that humanity should arise from the same spot from which the physical world grew: Jerusalem was not only the *tabbur* of the world, but the *tabbur* of humanity as well. In Rabbinic tradition, however, the *aggadah* is given a rather different twist: it was appropriate that Adam should be formed from the place where later atonement should be made for his sins.¹⁷

In Rabbinic literature the concept of the navel of the earth belongs to a constellation of mythological motifs that define Jerusalem as an *axis mundi*. In Jubilees Jerusalem is the focal point only of the horizontal, terrestrial plane. In Rabbinic texts, however, it has vertical as well as horizontal centrality: it is the focal point of different, superimposed planes. The Temple in Jerusalem and

Jerusalem itself stand over against the heavenly Temple and the heavenly Jerusalem: Jerusalem the terrestrial mid-point corresponds to Jerusalem the celestial mid-point.¹⁸ Jerusalem also corresponds, in a downwards direction, to Gehenna, the center of the underworld, an entrance to which is located near the Holy City. And the *'even shetiyyah*, on which the Ineffable Name is inscribed, serves as a capstone to seal the waters of the abyss and prevent them welling up and overwhelming the world.¹⁹ Jerusalem is the point where heaven, earth, and the underworld meet—a veritable *axis mundi*.

Here too it seems possible to introduce a diachronic perspective. In Tannaitic sources, as in the Bible, there are general statements about the centrality of Jerusalem. The map of the concentric circles of holiness surrounding the Temple in Mishnah Kelim 1:6–9 is a pertinent example. But this idea undoubtedly gains precision and force in the Amoraic period, when it is linked to renewed speculation about the navel of the earth. And although they are occasionally quoted in Babylonian sources, these traditions all appear to be Palestinian in origin. Mishnah Yoma's relation to later texts illustrates this development. There (5:2) it is stated that the *'even shetiyyah* has been in the Temple "from the days of the first prophets." Even allowing that the time reference of "from the days of the first prophets" is vague and probably means simply "from time immemorial,"²⁰ the language is odd if the *'even shetiyyah* is being thought of as the navel of the earth, since, by definition, the *'even shetiyyah* is the oldest thing on earth and has always been there. However, in the corresponding passage of the Tosefta (Yom ha-Kippurim 3:6) the cosmogonic function of the *'even shetiyyah* is clearly introduced and this sets the tone for the comments in the Yerushalmi and the Bavli and for later midrashic texts in general. These later ideas were attached to the *'even shetiyyah* by the common midrashic device of etymology. The mysterious word *shetiyyah* is derived either from the root חָשַׁת "to found" (hence "stone of foundation," i.e., foundation stone of the world), or from the root חָשַׁת "to weave" (hence "stone of weaving," involving comparison of the act of creation with the weaving of cloth). Thus the *'even shetiyyah* provided a convenient peg on which Palestinian Amoraic authorities were able to hang certain speculations about the cosmic and theological centrality of Jerusalem.

Why might these ideas have been stressed in Eretz Israel in Amoraic times? Again we may suspect a political purpose. Rome also regarded itself as the center of the world, the hub of a network of roads leading outwards to the edges of its empire. This was symbolized by the *miliarium aureum* in the Forum, the "golden milestone," which, "in letters of gilt, indicated the mileage from Rome along the trunk roads to key points in the empire."²¹ The Amoraic Sages seem increasingly to have regarded Rome and Jerusalem as rivals, particularly after the Empire became officially Christian and went over to "heresy." Jacob Neusner has suggested that this rivalry is a major motif of Genesis Rabba.²² The Rabbinic story, which circulated in Amoraic times, that Rome was founded when an angel stuck a reed into the sea and a mud-bank grew round it on which

the city was built,²³ reads like a parody of the story of the creation of the world from the *'even shetiyyah* in Jerusalem. The new emphasis on Jerusalem as the navel of the earth may be part of this anti-Roman rhetoric. Alternatively it may have been intended for an internal, Jewish audience. Isaiah Gafni has argued that the new stress on the importance and centrality of the Land of Israel which he finds in Palestinian Amoraic sources reflects an emerging political struggle between the Rabbinic schools of Eretz Israel and of Babylonia.²⁴ The religious authorities in Palestine, alarmed by the growing reputation of the Babylonian academies, began to highlight ideas that asserted or implied the primacy of Eretz Israel. Perhaps the *tibbur ha-'olam* and the *'even shetiyyah*, traditions were employed as part of this propaganda. If either of these suggestions is correct—and they are not mutually exclusive—then once again, for all its mythological color, the assertion that Jerusalem is the navel of the earth is intended, as in Jubilees, primarily to serve political ends.

NOTES

1. Trans. R. H. Charles, revised Ch. Rabin in H. D. F. Sparks (ed.), *The Apocryphal Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), p. 38.

2. It is also possible that the *omphalos* here is the city of Jerusalem, which could not, in keeping with the fictional standpoint of the narrative, be named, and that Zion is the center of Jerusalem. The author of Jubilees may also have intended a contrast between “the desert” = the uninhabited world and “the earth” = the inhabited earth, the *oikoumene*. The implication that the place of the giving of the Law was in the center of unoccupied territory to which no people had laid claim could have aggadic overtones. Neither of these readings of the text would materially affect my argument.

3. This I take to be the meaning of the statement, “these three were created as holy places *facing each other*.”

4. See my essay “Notes on the ‘Imago Mundi’ of the Book of Jubilees,” *Journal of Jewish Studies* 33 (1982): 197–213, and my article on “Early Jewish Geography” in the *Anchor Bible Dictionary* II, pp. 980–82.

5. It would also have served as a useful reminder to the Jewish Diaspora of the centrality of Jerusalem. Propaganda is usually aimed as much at “insiders” as “outsiders.”

6. The choice is clever because it exploits the fact that Carthage was a Punic (i.e., Canaanite) settlement. This lends an aura of historical credibility to the claim. The implication may be that at least *some* Canaanites did finally reach their patrimony, perhaps having been sent on their way by Joshua and the Israelites.

7. Procopius, *De bello vandalico* X: 13–22.

8. The suggestion that Jubilees intends to support the Hasmoneans may be greeted with some skepticism. Jubilees is normally regarded as anti-Hasmonean. It was certainly popular with the Dead Sea Sect, who were bitter opponents of the Hasmoneans. Moreover, Jubilees advocated a solar calendar and not the luni-solar calendar which prevailed in the Hasmonean-controlled Jerusalem Temple. However, it is not implausible to suggest that Jubilees and the Dead Sea Sect may have supported the concept of a greater Israel, while denying the Hasmonean claim to the high priesthood and the legitimacy of the Temple cult. Significantly the doctrine of a greater Israel is found not only in Jubilees but in the Genesis Apocryphon as well (IQGenAp. XXI).

9. See his excellent article on “har” in G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren (eds.), *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), pp. 437–438.

10. See P. D. A. Harvey, *Mappa Mundi: The Hereford World Map* (London: British Library, 1996). The map, which is on a single piece of parchment, is 5 feet 2 inches high and 4 feet 4 inches wide (1.58 x 1.33 meters).

11. Harvey, *Mappa Mundi*, p. 22.

12. Harvey, *Mappa Mundi*, pp. 24–26. Curiously Julius Caesar's survey of the empire is alluded to in the bottom left corner of the Hereford map, but this, in my view, cannot be used to link the Hereford map to the Agrippan map. It is simply a learned piece of *doctrina* on the part of Richard of Holdingham or some other medieval scholar.

13. See J. K. Wright, *The Geographical Lore of the Time of the Crusades* (New York: Dover, 1965), pp. 53–57.

14. Wright, *Geographical Lore*, pp. 259–261.

15. R. H. Charles, *The Book of Jubilees* (London: A. & C. Black, 1902), pp. xxvi–xxvii, gives a partial list of quotations.

16. See the parallels in Tosefta Yom ha-Kippurim 3:6 (ed. Zuckerman p.186); Yerushalmi Yoma 5:3; Bavli Yoma 54b. Further, Louis Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews*, vol. V (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1968), pp. 14–16 (the fundamental discussion of these traditions), and vol. V, p. 292; Zev Vilnay, *Legends of Jerusalem* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1987), pp. 5–36.

17. Genesis Rabba 14:8; Yerushalmi Nazir 7:2; Pirquei deRabbi Eli'ezer 12.

18. See Ginzberg, *Legends*, vol. V, p. 292, and Vilnay, *Legends of Jerusalem*, pp. 128–132, for references.

19. On the entrance to Gehenna, the center of the underworld, see Ginzberg, *Legends*, vol. V, p. 14, and Vilnay, *Legends of Jerusalem*, pp. 269–270. On the 'even shetiyah as the capstone, see Ginzberg, *Legends*, vol. V, pp. 15–16, and Vilnay, *Legends of Jerusalem*, pp. 78–80. Echoes of this latter tradition are found in Muslim sources: see Vilnay, *Legends of Jerusalem*, p. 19.

20. "The first prophets" are identified in Bavli Sotah 48b as Samuel and David, but this is probably a later attempt to give the vague expression some precision. See further Ginzberg, *Legends*, vol. VI, p. 69.

21. Lionel Casson, *Travel in the Ancient World* (London: Book Club Associates, 1979), p.173.

22 Jacob Neusner, *Genesis and Judaism* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985).

23. Sifrei Deuteronomy 52; Yerushalmi 'Avodah Zarah 1:2; Bavli Shabbat 56b. Ginzberg, *Legends*, vol. IV, p. 128, and vol. VI, p. 280. The story has a moral purpose: Rome was founded to punish Israel for her sins.

24. He argued this in the Third Jacobs Lectures in Rabbinic Thought, delivered at the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies in the Spring of 1994. I am unaware that Professor Gafni has formally published these important lectures, which were entitled, "To give you the Land of Canaan, to be your God" (Leviticus 25:38): Rabbinic Reflections on Land, Centre and Diaspora."

Jerusalem in Jewish Liturgy

STEFAN C. REIF

The Historical Problem

THERE CAN BE LITTLE DOUBT THAT JERUSALEM OCCUPIES an honored place in the medley of religious ideas formulated and transmitted by Jewish circles through countless generations. Equally incontrovertible is the notion that liturgy has, during those many centuries, functioned as a central medium for the expression of Judaism's most cherished principles of faith and practice. In the words of the late A. M. Habermann (EJ 9: 1560), "the mention of Jerusalem was obligatory in all the statutory prayers." How then should one attempt to summarize the historical development of the topic of Jerusalem in Jewish prayer?

If one was of a mind to do so, one could simply take the traditional *siddur* of any of the major rites, before the substantial revisions of the modern period, and summarize the cases in which Jerusalem makes an appearance. One would then have a comprehensive catalogue of texts that had been fairly standard for the best part of an entire millennium but had also, by virtue of their very canonicity and ritualization, lost the link with their original incorporation. I myself prefer to tackle the subject of Jerusalem in the first rather than the second millennium of rabbinic, liturgical history. It is there that one is likely to find the evidence that will prove so central to any understanding of what Jews, Christians, and Muslims had in common and how they differed in their approaches to the Holy City. That is the period during which only two major ritual traditions appear to have existed, one in Babylon and the other in the Land of Israel. They predate both the widespread standardization (based on the Babylonian example) and the subsequent renewal of ritual independence and initiative in both Europe and the Middle East. Here, in the formative era of rabbinic liturgy one is confronted by the problem of placing liturgical texts, which originated in that wide span of time, in a particular geographical, chronological, or theological context.

The historical difficulties are those of working with liturgical texts from the talmudic-midrashic literature, from the geonic corpora, and from the earliest sources preserved in the Cairo Genizah. There are of course general difficulties in dealing with any material from such origins. There are undoubtedly oral and written stages; clear indications of provenance are rare;

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and traditions often appear isolated. The matter of dating, contextualizing, and expounding the texts is consequently a challenging task. As far as liturgy is concerned, that task is made even more complicated by further considerations. To what extent may we assume that the text preserved in one generation precisely matches its format in an earlier one? Is there not a tendency to adjust versions to accommodate them to current thought? When a scribe cites a prayer, might he not absent-mindedly record what is familiar to him rather than what he is supposed to be transmitting? What is more, it is all too facile a solution to subscribe to the general principle that all short, simple Babylonian texts (from the Talmud, for example) represent the original form while all longer, more complex Palestinian versions (from the Genizah, for example) may universally be judged to be later accretions. These and other difficulties have led scholars to avoid the kind of detailed historical reconstruction of liturgical history that would explain what informed many textual choices in favor of a less speculative approach that concentrates on an account of what these choices simply were. The theological history of rabbinic liturgy deserves no less attention than its text-critical analysis since every variant carries with it a meaningful religious message of some sort. How to proceed in attempting to meet both these needs in this brief and necessarily modest examination of the place of Jerusalem in the first few centuries of rabbinic liturgy?

What I propose to do is to examine a few of the major prayers (but not liturgical poems) that were incontrovertibly central to the rabbinic tradition as they are documented in the talmudic and geonic sources, which are in many cases representative of authoritative viewpoints, and as they are found in the Genizah fragments, which are often more indicative of less conformist trends. I shall deliberately refrain from defining texts as specifically Babylonian or Palestinian in order not to confuse textual evidence with its assumed provenance—nor unjustifiably to restrict the interpretative possibilities.

Yom Kippur Tradition

A start may be made with a liturgical tradition that lays strong claim to be one of the earliest documented in the talmudic-midrashic literature. It describes a ritual that took place in the Temple on Yom Kippur, and, given that it has no real parallels or equivalents in the post-Temple period to confuse or corrupt the text, it may be regarded as a reliable testimony to an important list of theological priorities inherited by the rabbis. The beginning of the seventh chapter in the mishnaic tractate Yoma records that after the High Priest had read out some relevant pentateuchal passages, he pronounced eight benedictions for the Torah, Temple-service (*'avodah*), Thanksgiving, Forgiveness of Sin, Temple (*miqdash*), Israel, Priests, and other (more general) matters. The Tosefta (3.13) identifies the first benediction as that familiar to the worshipper from synagogue (or, perhaps, academic) use; the

next three as those included in the *'amidah*; the fifth, sixth, and seventh as individual (unique perhaps?) benedictions; and the last as a special plea for the security of the Jewish people.

Further comment is provided in the talmudic tractates. The Palestinian Talmud (7.1) cites the concluding formula for all the benedictions; the ones that are of special interest to us in the present context are those for the Temple-service, Temple, and Priesthood. The latter two allude to God's special choice of these two institutions by the use of the phrases *ha-bokher bamiqdash* and *ha-bokher ba-kohanim*, and to the awesome worship of God in the imperfect tense by the use of the phrase *she'otekha nira' we-na'avod*. What is of special significance here is an alternative phraseology offered for the Temple. Instead of noting its Divine selection, the third-century Palestinian *'amora* Rabbi Idi opts for a phrase about the Temple that refers to the Divine presence in Zion (*hashokhen betziyyon*). Little is added to the discussion by the Babylonian Talmud (70a), which merely cites (but not in the Munich manuscript) a tannaitic tradition virtually at one with that of the Tosefta. What then of Jerusalem the city? Its only mention in this context is in variant texts of the Mishnah which cite it between Israel and the Priests and therefore create a textual problem by referring to nine, rather than eight items.¹

Grace After Meals

Another liturgical phenomenon that is widely recognized as having had its origins in the pre-rabbinic period is the grace after meals. What remain more open questions are the degree to which its four benedictions—dealing with food, the land of Israel, Jerusalem, and God's goodness—are a revolutionary innovation of the tannaitic rabbis and whether each was appended to a basic text-form at a different point of development. In this case, however, there is little difficulty in locating the context in which Jerusalem occurs, since the third benediction is devoted to it and the concluding formula is exclusively concerned with that city. The problem here is that on approaching sources from the first Christian millennium, one is confronted with a wide variety of content. The closing benediction itself, if we include both the sabbath and weekday versions, may refer simply to the building of Jerusalem, to the consolation of Zion through the building of Jerusalem, or to David's God and the building of Jerusalem.

Such complexity appears positively straightforward when compared with the situation as regards the subjects covered in the body of the benediction, according to a variety of textual and literary traditions. It is obviously not possible in the present context to record all the variants, but if the briefest and most extensive lists are set side by side, the range of content will be clear. The simplest formulation would appear to have included a request for God's mercy to be shown to his people Israel, his city Jerusalem, his Temple (*hekhal*, *ma'on*), and, perhaps as early additions to such a

formulation, to his glorious habitation, Zion and to the Davidic dynasty. Some versions place an emphasis on the secure provision of food while others make a link between that subject and the main theme of the benediction by stressing that the worshipper's consumption of food and drink by no means indicates that he has forgotten the plight of Jerusalem and its need for restoration. In a number of texts, that theme of restoration is spelled out, in some cases after the concluding benediction, with pleas for some or all of the developments referred to as the consolation of Zion, the building of Jerusalem, and the return there of God's presence and rule, of the Davidic (= messianic) kingdom, of the sacrificial system, and of the Jewish population.

'Amidah

Given that the fourteenth benediction of the daily *'amidah* shares with the third benediction of the *birkat ha-mazon* just discussed the central theme of Jerusalem, it is by no means surprising to find that they have in common many of the related topics that are to be found in the body of the text. The major difference between them is that in the case of the *'amidah* benediction there are two options, of sound talmudic pedigree, for the treatment of the restored kingdom of David. According to one, it appears as part of the Jerusalem benediction while, according to the other, it is treated in an independent benediction. Inevitably, there are indications of conflated versions and of the insertion of parts of the text of the grace after meals, but three archetypal formulations stand at the center of most textual witnesses.

The first of these, which is perhaps the closest to the simpler format recorded for the *birkat ha-mazon*, invokes God's mercy first on Israel his people, on Jerusalem his city, and on his Temple (*hekhal, miqdash, ma'on*), and then on his glorious habitation, Zion; pleads for the building of an eternal Jerusalem; and concludes with a reference to God as the builder of Jerusalem. In the second formulation, the messianic kingdom of David is added to the subjects of God's projected mercy; these are again Israel, Jerusalem, and Zion, the last mentioned appearing on its own, without any specific word for the Temple itself. After the addendum referring to the Davidic kingdom, the Temple returns in the form of a plea made for the reconstruction of God's house and palace. Since the Davidic kingdom in the Jerusalem benediction is mentioned, the concluding formula understandably describes the recipient of the prayer as the God of David and the builder of Jerusalem.² The third archetypal formulation again has the simpler concluding formula on the one theme (*boneh yerushalayim*), as well as a plea for the building of an eternal Jerusalem, but any similarity with either of the other two formulations ends there. God is in simple terms requested kindly to return to his city of Jerusalem (or, according to a textual variant, make it his habitation) and there is no mention whatsoever of any of its other institutions.

Other Prayers

There are three other benedictions which use similar formulations in dealing with the topic of Jerusalem and which occur, respectively, in the service for the fast day of the Ninth of Av, in the benedictions that follow the *haftarah* reading, and in the benedictions that are recited at a wedding feast. The special prayer formulated in talmudic times for the Ninth of Av and inserted at some point in the *'amidah* during one or all of the services to be held on that day is designed to make specific mention of the fate of Jerusalem. In its simplest form, this insertion first reads very much like the fourteenth benediction of the *'amidah* itself, craving God's mercy (not his compassion) on Israel his people, Jerusalem his city, and Zion his glorious habitation—while then adding to the list the ruined city, whose plight and divinely promised ultimate restoration are duly noted. As far as the concluding formula is concerned, God is again cited as the builder of Jerusalem, or more complexly as either the God of David and the builder of Jerusalem, or the consoler of Zion and the builder of Jerusalem.

The initial word of the second blessing after the prophetic reading on the subject of Zion also occurs as either *rahem* or *nahem* and the variant concluding formulas once more contain references to either the consolation of Zion, this time with her children, or to the building of Jerusalem. Since the benediction directly concerns Jerusalem, the remainder of the content is also of importance for our discussion. The titles of Jerusalem are here given as “Zion your city” and “our house of life” and there is also a call for swift vengeance on behalf of those who have been saddened, presumably by its loss.

If Jerusalem stands as a theme in its own right in both of these benedictions, its relevance to the wedding feast is somewhat more problematic. One must assume that the philosophy behind its inclusion is that even at times of self-indulgence and joy one should remember the tragic loss of the historic and spiritual center. Be that as it may, there is still ambiguity about whether to place the stress on the joyous occasion or on the loss, and this makes itself particularly felt in two of the benedictions. In the fourth, the joy of the barren woman, joyfully gathering her children to her (*kibbutz baneha*), clearly serves as a metaphor alluding to the return of the Jews to Jerusalem since the concluding formula praises God as the one who will gladden Zion through (the return of) her children. The subject of the fifth benediction is the joy of the participants, requested of God, as he produced it in Adam by creating a wife for him (*kesamehakha yetzirkha began eden*), but the concluding formula varies in different traditions. One placed the emphasis exclusively on God's gift of joy to the bride and groom; another on such a gift to his people (or Zion) and on the building of Jerusalem; and a third on the creation of his people's joy in Jerusalem.

Again 'Amidah

Since this analysis has perforce alluded to such Jerusalem institutions, it will not be appropriate to leave the *'amidah* without devoting some attention to the

seventeenth benediction, that entitled *'avodah* and dealing with the Temple service, at least in so far as the textual data are relevant to the matter of Jerusalem. This benediction is particularly important since it is highly likely that elements of it have their origin in Temple times. Here, the textual options are basically two, even if there is the usual phenomenon of examples that are not wholly consistent with either option but incorporate elements of both. In the first of these, the text remains true to the title given to the benediction in various talmudic passages, namely *birkat ha-'avodah*, by making use of the root *'avad* twice in the body of the text and once in the concluding formula. God is asked to express his favor by dwelling in Zion, and a future is described in which his servants will serve him there and the reciters of the prayer will worship him in Jerusalem. The final phrase of the text is that God will then find favor in them and the concluding formula that the reciters of the benediction will serve him.

The second formulation has a somewhat different style, order, and content. It entreats God to favor his people and their prayer, to restore the service to his Temple (*devir betekha*), and to accept favorably their service (*'avodah*), including an ambiguous reference to "fire-offerings" that could allude either to the restoration or the acceptance. There then follows a final appeal for sight of God's merciful return to Zion, followed by a concluding formula that describes him as the one who restores his presence to Zion. It will perhaps be useful to spell out more precisely the differences between the two. The first formulation has a text that centers on what will happen liturgically in a future Zion, followed by a concluding formula that stresses (and presupposes?) divine service there, while the second has a form that centers on God's acceptance of Jewish liturgy, followed by a concluding formula that stresses (and presupposes?) his return to Zion. The mention of Jerusalem is unique to the first version and that of prayer (as distinct from service) unique to the second, while the concern with finding God's favor is common to them both.

Whether or not the prayer entitled *ya'aleh we-yavo* was originally more closely associated with another liturgical context, by the geonic period it is certainly part of the *'avodah* benediction and consequently deserves some attention at this point in the discussion. The prayer is inserted on festive occasions and expresses the hope that on this special day God will remember his special Jewish connections. What these connections are is a matter of textual controversy, although it may safely be said that certain circles tended to expand the list into a kind of litany. Perhaps there was a simple form that referred to no more than the divine remembrance of the worshippers, God's people Israel. Be that as it may, one dominant formulation in the post-talmudic period also opted for a number of references associated with Jerusalem, not only mentioning God's city, without specific name, but also using a number of poetic terms for the Temple. The other specified Jerusalem by name, also cited "our fathers," and in some versions included the Davidic messiah, but made no mention of the Temple.

Five Other Contexts

Before an attempt is made to summarize and analyze the textual evidence, attention must be drawn to some additional data relating to Jerusalem's treatment in five other contexts, where it is of less central significance than in the cases noted above. In the *musaf* prayer for the pilgrim festivals, the basic theme is the future offering, on the respective occasions, of the requisite sacrifices ordained in the Pentateuch. Again there are two basic styles. In the first, biblical verses play an important part, the formulation is not greatly at odds with those used for the other *'amidot* of the day, and there are simple references to the return to Zion and Jerusalem, to the joyous sighting of the Temple, and to the festal offerings. The second version is more complex, differs from the other *'amidot*, and expands on the theme of the return to Jerusalem and the future offerings in the Temple. It decries the current inability to make the pilgrimage to the Temple site and looks forward not only to the return of the people and the sacrifices but also to the restoration of God's presence and of the specific duties of the priests, levites, and Jewish population.

In the second post-*shema* benediction of the evening service, God is entreated to protect the worshippers from catastrophes and to ensure their peace and security. While one version of the concluding formula remains with the general theme of God's protection of Israel, the other extends this to include God's "stretching the canopy of peace" over his people Israel, consoling Zion and building Jerusalem. The matter of peace is itself the subject of the final *'amidah* benediction and in some versions the blessing is invoked not only on God's people Israel but also on his city, or, more specifically, on Jerusalem.

As far as the *qaddish* is concerned, the version that came to be used at the burial service and at a *siyyum* ceremony goes beyond the simple praise of God and contains a passage of messianic character, probably originating in the early rabbinic academy. The theme there is that God will establish his kingdom, revive the dead, build Jerusalem, reconstruct the Temple, and replace heathen ritual with authentic worship. Finally, it is interesting to note that the text of the *ge'ulah* benediction included in the Passover *Haggadah* (*Pesachim*, 10.6) also includes a messianic section, in various formulations, that looks forward to the restoration of the Temple and the sacrifices and to the joy to be engendered by that development and by "the building of your city." Another version, however, refers more simply to next year's joyous celebration of the Temple service in "Zion your city."

In Summary

What then emerges if we now attempt to capture an image of the thematic wood rather than the textual trees, first bringing into view the overall treatment of the city and its special institutions, and then moving on to the activities of

God and of Israel, as they are all described in the sources examined earlier? The city is referred to as Zion, as the city of God, and simply as Jerusalem. The Temple enjoys a larger number of epithets, the basic forms alluding to it as a holy place (*miqdash*), glorious habitation (*mishkan kavod*) or house of God, while the more lyrical terms include *hekhal*, *ma'on*, *devir*, and *bet hayyim*. The act of liturgy, or divine service, attracts the term '*avodah*' but there are also more specific references to sacrifices, as well as instances in which prostration and prayer are included in the formulations.

It appears that the Jewish people involved one way or another with Jerusalem are priests, levites, Israel, and Zion's children, and there are mentions of the royal Davidic dynasty. Apart from the references to its worship of God, reports of Israel's activities are fairly limited, with notes about her exile, her renewed sight of the holy place, and her return. As is only to be expected in praises of God and his power, on the other hand, the divine activities vis-à-vis Israel and her institutions receive considerable attention. They include (as well as his divine status) his presence and his potentially favorable treatment of Israel; his mercy, compassion, and building program; his vengeance, and his blessing of happiness; and his eternal restoration of Israel's lost glories.

The data collected and the themes identified are also capable of being interpreted in the context of the variety of religious ideas to be found in Jewish liturgical material in the period under discussion. There is some ambivalence about whether it is the Temple or the city that is spiritually predominant. While the Temple is sometimes seen as God's place, it also functions in a special way to the benefit of Israel. The service of God may be expressed and his favor obtained not only through the Temple rituals, past and future, but also through other acts of worship. The separate functions of Israel, the priesthood and the levites are blurred in contexts in which more general reference is made to Zion and her children.

The theological and political significance of Davidic rule and the building of Jerusalem are stressed in some prayers while in others the dominant theme may be the cultic shortcomings of exile and how these will be made good by the restoration, or Israel's tragedy and how its pain may be assuaged by God's mercy, or the exercise of his power as purveyor of joy or recompense. Descriptions of the future may be oriented towards security, the recovery of what was lost, or the messianic eon. It may be presupposed either that it is primarily God's presence that requires to be restored to Zion, or that his special favor will be obtained when Jerusalem again becomes the center of his cultic service.

Some Interpretations

It is possible with some degree of confidence to identify early tannaitic material, distinguish it from later talmudic and geonic sources, and date the

contents of the Genizah texts to the end of the first Christian millennium, and a reconstruction of the development of liturgical ideas becomes possible. In the period before 70 C.E., a realistic picture emerges of the Temple and its service, with the priests at their center and the people of Israel at their edge, all of them the beneficiaries of the special favor expressed by God for Zion, a term that alludes to the whole religious arrangement. During the talmudic period, there is the keen anticipation of a recovery from the disasters that befell these institutions and the expectation of an almost imminent restoration of the city of Jerusalem, the Temple and its service, and the special relationship with God that they represent. God's compassion and mercy will bless Israel with security, and the people's prayers, as well as their offerings, will attract divine favor.

As even the vaguest folk memories of actual Jerusalem institutions fade through the passing of the centuries, so the prayers chosen most commonly to relate to them become less embedded in experience and convey a more futuristic and messianic message. God's infinite power will bring unexpected joy and recompense to those suffering the pain of exile and persecution. A detailed picture is painted of an idealized future, with Jerusalem functioning with more than its former glory. The Temple and the Davidic kingdom are presupposed and each group of Jews is seen to be playing a part in the scene. Economy of expression and simplicity of language, particularly as championed by the Babylonian formulations, give way to the kind of generous augmentation and colorful vocabulary that are more characteristic of Palestinian prayer texts.

What if, however, the dating of tannaitic material is more problematic and the talmudic traditions as they have come down to us are less than reliable witnesses to the precise prayer forms of the talmudic period? Perhaps geonic testimonies are not disinterested records of liturgical developments but contain more than their share of propaganda on behalf of their own notions and ambitions. Is there always such a clear-cut distinction between what is authoritative and Babylonian on the one hand and what is deviant and Palestinian on the other? Conceivably, Genizah texts of the ninth and tenth centuries are authentic bearers of liturgical traditions that predate the geonic tendency to standardization but became popular only afterwards. It must be allowed that such doubts would call into question some of the chronological reconstruction just attempted. At the same time, however, it would still be possible to maintain that the religious ideas identified in the liturgical texts examined, in all their variety and difference of emphasis, testify to changing conceptions of Jerusalem and its institutions on the part of Jews in the first Christian millennium. The changes may be due as much to the different milieus from which various forms of liturgy emerged as to chronological developments over a period of centuries. But a synchronic rather than a diachronic analysis would still detect the same rich variety of theological notions appertaining to Jerusalem. The problem is that any attempt to set

their emergence and development in particular historical contexts suffers seriously from a lack of matching historical data. Whatever the methodological preference, there can be no avoiding the conclusion that Jerusalem stood close to the hearts and minds of Jewish worshippers whenever and wherever they formulated prayers that were central to their reflections on the present and their aspirations for the future.

NOTES

1. Palestinian Talmud, *Yoma* 7.1, ed. Krotoschin, f. 44b:

ומברך עליה שמונה ברכות על התורה הבוחר בתורה על העבודה שאותך נירא ונעבוד על
ההוריה הטוב לך להודות על מחילת העון מוחל עונות עמו ישראל ברחמים על המקדש
הבוחר במקדש ואמר רבי אידי השוכן בציון על ישראל הבוחר בישראל על הכהנים הבוחר
בכהן על שאר תפלה ותחינה ובקשה שעמך ישראל צריכין להיוושע לפניך בא"י שומע תפילה.

There is some doubt about the precise identification of the Idi cited here since he is entitled "Rabbi" and not "Rav" and is apparently therefore not the Palestinian teacher with the strong Babylonian background.

2. Y. Luger, *The Weekday 'Amidah Based on the Genizah* (Ph.D. thesis, Bar-Ilan University, 1992; Hebrew; 2 volumes), 1, pp. 169-179. The two options are perhaps already presupposed in *Tosefta* 3.25, ed. Zuckerman, p. 9. There are three *archetypal* formulations, the third of which is as follows:

לירושלים עירך ברחמים תשוב ותבנה אותה בנין עולם. בא"י בונה ירושלים

Jerusalem in Jewish Law and Custom: A Preliminary Typology

DAVID GOLINKIN

JEWISH LITERATURE¹ WRITTEN DURING THE PAST 2,000 years has preserved hundreds, if not thousands, of laws and customs related to the city of Jerusalem. This material has been collected in many books and articles, but no attempt has been made thus far to organize this vast corpus of laws and customs. I therefore present a preliminary typology which will facilitate further study and investigation.

The laws and customs related to Jerusalem can be conveniently divided into three major categories: (1) Laws and customs in Talmudic literature which are attributed to Second-Temple Jerusalem; (2) post-Destruction laws and customs observed by Jews throughout the world in order to remember Jerusalem; and (3) post-Destruction laws and customs observed in the city of Jerusalem itself by Jewish residents and visitors.

1. Laws and Customs Attributed to Second-Temple Jerusalem

This category consists of at least fifty laws and customs. I only mention them briefly since they have already been listed and investigated by quite a few scholars.² About twenty of these laws are contained in a list which has come down to us in four different versions.³ The most well-known version (B Bava Kamma 82b) reads as follows:

Ten things were said about Jerusalem: That a house sold there can be redeemed even though it's a walled city (see Leviticus 25:29–30); that it does not bring a heifer whose neck is broken (see Deuteronomy 21:1–9); that it can never become a condemned city (see Deuteronomy 13:13–18); that its houses cannot be defiled through leprosy (see Leviticus 14:33–53); that neither beams nor balconies are allowed to project; that no dunghills are made there; that no kilns are made there; that neither gardens nor orchards are cultivated there, except for the rose gardens which existed from the days of the former prophets; that no chickens may be raised there; and that no dead person may be kept there overnight.

Scholarly opinion is divided about the historical veracity of these traditions. Some scholars, such as Finkelstein and Bialoblocki, accept most of these traditions at face value. Guttman, on the other hand, views most or all

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of them as apocryphal. He points out that of the twenty laws found in the four versions of the list, only four occur in all four versions. Furthermore, most of these laws do not occur in the Mishnah. In addition, there are over 300 disagreements in Rabbinic literature between Bet Shammai and Bet Hillel, and yet none of them concern the laws of Jerusalem. Lastly, even the four laws found in all four versions are contradicted by other rabbinic sources.⁴ He therefore suggests that these laws really started out in the realm of *aggadah* or non-legal material:

The predominant tendency after the fall of the Temple was to emphasize the unique and distinguished status of the city by pointing to its superiority not merely from the viewpoint of beauty, sanctity, historical past, etc., but also from the vantage point of the law. Accordingly, the Tannaim put special effort in finding and creating laws and practices that would set Jerusalem apart from all the other cities of the land. As a consequence, we find that *halakhot* are being used in the same way as *aggadot*.⁵

A recent study by Safrai takes a more balanced view. Regarding the four lists, he admits that “it is not unlikely that some items were not traditions from the time of the Temple, but only imaginary creations . . . that developed after the destruction of the Temple.” But he then proceeds to examine four specific laws and to show through careful analysis of rabbinic sources, Apocrypha, Josephus, and the Dead Sea Scrolls that they were “actually practiced in Jerusalem during the time of the Second Temple or at least . . . reflect the reality of that time.”⁶ Safrai’s approach to these laws and customs is, no doubt, the appropriate one. We should not take them at face value nor reject them en masse as apocryphal. We should, rather, critically examine each custom using rabbinic and external sources in order to see whether it can be dated to Second-Temple Jerusalem.

2. Post-Destruction Laws and Customs to Commemorate Jerusalem and Its Destruction

The second category consists of at least twenty-five laws and customs observed by many, and sometimes all, Jewish communities throughout the world for hundreds and even thousands of years in order to remember Jerusalem. These customs of commemoration have not yet been examined in a critical fashion.⁷ They can be conveniently divided into five categories: (A) wedding customs; (B) funeral customs; (C) prayer customs; (D) fast days; and (E) general mourning customs observed throughout the year.

A. Wedding Customs

The three most well-known customs in this category are placing ashes on the groom’s head, reciting the verse “If I forget thee Jerusalem” (Psalms 137:5–6), and breaking a glass at weddings.⁸ In addition, there are a number of lesser-known customs worth mentioning:

(1) Rabbi Yom-Tov Lippman Heller (Moravia and Poland, 1579–1654) is the first to mention breaking a plate at the *tena'im* or *knassmahl* or engagement ceremony “as a reminder of the destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem.” As in the case of breaking a glass at weddings, this is no doubt a late explanation for a universal tendency to frighten away demons on happy occasions,⁹ but it shows that Jews frequently tied such customs to the Destruction of the Temple.

(2) In betrothal contracts or *tena'im* written by R. Levi Yitzhak of Berdichev, it was stipulated:

The wedding will, God willing, take place in the Holy City of Jerusalem. But if, Heaven forbid, because of our sins, the Messiah will not have come by then, the wedding will take place in Berdichev.¹⁰

Today, some Jews write similar phrases in their wedding invitations.

(3) Beginning in the fourteenth century in Germany, and especially in Italy, brides would wear large, ornate rings in addition to their actual wedding ring. These rings were frequently crowned with an ornate building. Abrahams, Wolf, and Sperber maintain that these buildings represent the Temple in Jerusalem so that the bride too should remember the Holy City on her wedding day.¹¹

B. Funeral Customs

(1) Gafni has shown that Diaspora Jews began to be buried in Israel in the third century because they believed that burial in Israel atones for one's sins and that those buried in Israel will be the first to be resurrected.¹² It is clear that Jews believed the same things about Jerusalem and especially about the Mount of Olives where the resurrection of the dead was supposed to begin.¹³ Thus, it is not surprising that many Diaspora Jews made *aliyah* to Jerusalem in their old age in order to die and be buried there, while many others were taken to Jerusalem for burial after their deaths.¹⁴

(2) Other Jews were not buried *in* Jerusalem but were buried with their feet *facing* Jerusalem so that when resurrection comes, they might be ready to stand up and walk towards the Holy City.¹⁵

(3) There is a widespread custom to comfort mourners both in the *shurah* (double line) at the cemetery and at the house of mourning with the sentence: “May God comfort you among the other mourners for Zion and Jerusalem.”¹⁶

C. Prayer Customs

Aside from the frequent mention of Jerusalem in the liturgy, there are a number of prayer customs associated with Jerusalem:

(1) The book of Daniel (6:11) indicates that Diaspora Jews used to face Jerusalem in prayer in the second century B.C.E. An oft-repeated *b'raita* says that Jews all over the world face Jerusalem while Jews all over Jerusalem face the

Holy of Holies.¹⁷ Though the archaeological evidence is mixed, many ancient synagogues also faced Jerusalem.¹⁸ In any case, this was the practice codified in Jewish Law and is the universal practice down to our own day.¹⁹

(2) A corollary of this custom is that a person must have doors or windows in his home facing Jerusalem so that he can pray through them. This law is based on a literal reading of the cited verse from Daniel.²⁰

(3) R. Meir of Rothenberg (Germany, d. 1293) would bow towards Jerusalem every time he mentioned the word “Jerusalem” in the Grace after Meals.²¹

D. Fast Days

(1) Since the Destruction of the First Temple in 586 B.C.E., Jews have fasted on the Third of Tishrei, the Tenth of Tevet, the Seventeenth of Tammuz, and the Ninth of Av in order to commemorate specific events related to the Destruction.²²

(2) The days preceding the Ninth of Av were observed as days of mourning in which haircutting, laundering, betrothals, and marriages were forbidden. As the centuries wore on, the number of prohibitions slowly expanded to include eating meat and drinking wine, and the period of mourning was expanded by many to the three weeks between the Seventeenth of Tammuz and the Ninth of Av.²³

(3) According to rabbinic tradition (Mishnah Ta’anit 4:6 and B Ta’anit 29a), both Temples were destroyed on the Ninth of Av. On that day every year, Jews throughout the world abstain not only from food but also from bathing, anointing oneself, wearing leather shoes, and conjugal relations. They recite Lamentations at night and special *kinot* or elegies during the day while sitting on the ground.²⁴

(4) Specific Jewish communities added additional mourning customs such as putting ashes on their foreheads, wrapping the Torah scrolls in black, and announcing how many years had passed since the Destruction of the Second Temple.²⁵

E. General Mourning Customs

In addition to the customs described above, which were attached to specific life-cycle events or days of the year, there are a number of general mourning customs that were observed throughout the year.

(1) The Mishnah in Sotah (9:11) says that:

When the Sanhedrin ceased [judging capital cases a number of years before the Destruction], singing ceased at wedding feasts, as it is written: “They shall not drink wine with a song” (Isaiah 24:9).

This prohibition went through many permutations throughout the centuries, but the general trend was to allow religious music while prohibiting

secular music. Indeed, the latter type of music is prohibited by some Orthodox rabbis until this very day.²⁶

(2) A much rarer mourning custom is related by R. Yoel Sirkes (Poland, 1561–1640) in the name of *Sefer Ha'eshkol* (by R. Abraham ben Isaac, Provence, d. 1159):

If you hear the sound of gentiles dancing and playing flutes and rejoicing, sigh and say: “Master of the universe, Your people whom you took out of Egypt have sinned doubly and been punished doubly. . . . You have destroyed their palaces, You have stopped their joy. . . . You have cast down their glory from the Heavens to the earth. . . . Oh God, do not be angry at us forever. . . . May it be Your will that you build Jerusalem Your holy city speedily in our day, Amen.”²⁷

(3) We know from a *b'raita* that after the Destruction of the Second Temple, there were many ascetics who refused to eat meat and drink wine, since they were no longer offered in the Temple. Rabbi Joshua scolded them saying: by that logic we can no longer eat bread, figs, and grapes nor drink water because they too were offered in the Temple!

He said to them: My sons, to mourn too much is impossible and not to mourn is impossible. Rather, thus said the sages: a person plasters his house and leaves a small section unplastered in memory of Jerusalem. A person prepares a feast and leaves a little bit out in memory of Jerusalem. A woman makes jewelry and leaves a small item out in memory of Jerusalem, as it is written (Psalms 137:5–6): “If I forget thee Jerusalem, may my right hand forget its cunning. . . .”²⁸

This *b'raita* was quoted by the Bavli and standard codes of Jewish law, and these customs are still observed by some ultra-Orthodox Jews until today.²⁹

3. Customs Actually Observed by Residents of and Visitors to Jerusalem from the Year 70 C.E. Until Today

The third and, by far, largest category we shall discuss consists of laws and customs actually observed by residents of Jerusalem and pilgrims since the Destruction. These customs, which have never been studied in a critical fashion, can be conveniently divided into five main categories: (A) laws and customs not unique to Jerusalem which reflect the fact that the city was a melting pot for Jews from all over the world; (B) unique mourning customs over and above those mentioned above; (C) laws and customs that mimic specific laws and customs of Second-Temple Jerusalem; (D) laws and customs whose aim was to maintain the chastity of the city's inhabitants; (E) laws and customs that express the Jewish love for the city.

Before we proceed, a word is in order about the vast number of sources used for this section. I relied on five types of sources: (1) bibliographies; (2) genizah fragments; (3) the responsa literature; (4) the *takkanot*, or rabbinic enactments, of Jerusalem as well as other collections of local customs; and (5) travel itineraries and letters from the tenth-twentieth centuries. These latter documents are crucial because they enable us to compare the laws and customs *in theory* with eyewitness accounts of what was actually done *in practice*.

A. Melting-Pot Customs

Rabbi Hizkiyah Da Silva lived in Jerusalem for most of his adult life (from 1678–1695). He states that “in Jerusalem one must always follow the stricter custom because all [of her inhabitants] are gathered [= *lekuta*’e].”³⁰

This aspect of the laws and customs of Jerusalem is also reflected in a letter sent by Rabbi Yisrael Ashkenazi to his benefactor back home in Italy (ca. 1517–1523):

In the days of Rabbi Ovadiah (of Bertinoro, 1488–ca. 1516), [the prayer customs] were like that of the Jews of Israel . . . but now that the Spanish Jews have been added [due to the Expulsion of 1492] . . . they do as they please. And the cantors: there are three Spanish Jews and one from Israel *and each one of them does as he pleases*. One says the *kedushah* [which begins with] *keter yitnu lekha*; and one says [*nakdishakh v’na’aritzakh*]. And there are variants in the *kedushah* itself. And there are many examples like this, one [cantor] adds and another subtracts. . . .³¹

Indeed, by far the largest number of laws and customs reflect the fact that Jerusalem was a melting pot for Jews from all over the world. Here is a sampling of a few such customs:

(1) Originally, *kedushah* was only recited in Israel and Jerusalem on Shabbat or when *musaf* was recited. Pirkoi ben Baboi (ca. 800) reports how this custom was changed due to the influence of Babylonian immigrants:

Until now they did not say [*kedushah* which includes the *Shema*] in *Eretz Yisrael* except on Shabbat and festivals and only in *Shaharit*, except in Jerusalem and in every city which contains Babylonians who made a fight until [the Palestinian Jews] accepted upon themselves to recite *kedushah* every day. But in the other cities of *Eretz Yisrael*, which do not contain Babylonians, they do not recite [*kedushah*] except on Shabbat and festivals.³²

(2) Jumping forward almost a millennium to the *takkanot* of 1730, we are told that “a betrothed man may not see his fiancée until the night of the wedding,” the purpose being to prevent pregnancies before the wedding. But, upon investigation, one discovers that the same *takkanah* was enacted in Candia in 1228, in the Balkans ca. 1500, in Safed in the sixteenth century, and in Aleppo.³³

(3) Finally, when R. Joseph Schwartz arrived in Jerusalem from Germany in 1837, he reported to his brother back home that bridegrooms in Jerusalem read a special portion from the Torah (Genesis 24:1–8) on the Shabbat after their wedding.³⁴ Yet, in fact, this custom is not indigenous to Jerusalem. It is already mentioned in eleventh century Rome and thirteenth century Saragossa and was observed in Cochín, India, and Algeria as well.³⁵

B. Mourning Customs Over and Above those Practiced Elsewhere

In addition to the mourning customs described above, pilgrims and natives of Jerusalem observed a number of mourning customs that stemmed from their proximity to the Temple Mount and its ruins:

(1) A *b'raita* in the Babylonian Talmud (Mo'ed Kattan 26a) rules that one must tear one's garments upon seeing the cities of Judea, Jerusalem, and the Temple in ruins.³⁶ R. Elazar adds that one recites special verses (Isaiah 64:9–10) for each specific type of ruin. This law was not merely codified by the major codes of Jewish law. We know from travelers' itineraries that it was actually practiced by visitors to Jerusalem in the years ca. 100, 1210, ca. 1240, 1481, 1488, 1495, 1879 and 1888.³⁷ R. Ovadia of Bertinoro, for example, described the ceremony in his famous letter of 1488:

And at a distance of three quarters of a mile . . . the blessed city was revealed to us . . . and there we rent our clothes as required. And when we continued a bit more, our ruined holy and glorious house was revealed to us and we rent our garments a second time for the Temple. . . .³⁸

(2) The Itinerary of the Bordeaux Pilgrim written by an anonymous Christian pilgrim in 333 C.E. contains an oft-quoted description of the observance of the Ninth of Av in Jerusalem at that time:

These are two statues of Hadrian, and not far from the statues there is a perforated stone to which the Jews come every year and anoint it, bewail themselves with groans, rend their garments, and so depart.³⁹

(3) The *Avelei Tziyon* or “Mourners of Zion” lived in Jerusalem and elsewhere from at least 850–1173 C.E. They are, variously, referred to as “mourners of”: “Zion, His glorious height, the Eternal House, the Temple and the Tabernacles, Jerusalem, and Zion and Jerusalem.” The sources report that they “desired the Redemption morning, noon and night,” “sigh and groan and await the Redemption and mourn for Jerusalem,” and that they “do not eat meat or drink wine and they wear black . . . and they fast . . . and they ask mercy before God.” Finally, they composed and recited special poems and elegies for Jerusalem and the Temple.⁴⁰

(4) Finally, since the 1860s, many of the ultra-Orthodox Jews of Jerusalem prohibit the use of instrumental music even at weddings. This prohibition is attributed to Rabbi Meir Auerbach (1815–1878), one of the leading Ashkenazic rabbis in Jerusalem, or to the saintly Rabbi Nahum Shadik (1813–1866). Luntz says it was enacted because the men and the musicians looked at the women. Today, it is explained as a sign of mourning for the Destruction. Ultra-Orthodox Jews circumvent this prohibition by holding their weddings at Moshav Orah outside the city limits or by using singers who accompany themselves on drums.⁴¹

C. Laws and Customs that Mimic those of the Second Temple

Given the fact that the ruins of the Second Temple are located in Jerusalem, it is not surprising that the Jews of the city developed laws and customs that mimic some of the laws and customs of the Second Temple.

(1) The classic list of the laws of Second-Temple Jerusalem mentioned above states that “one does not allow a dead body to remain there overnight,”⁴²

i.e., burial must be performed on the day of death or on that very night. Rabbi Eliezer Waldenberg (b. 1917) claims that there is an oral tradition “from mouth to mouth that since Jewish settlement was renewed within the walls for a few hundred years, the great rabbis were very careful to observe this prohibition.”⁴³ In any case, this custom which imitates the Second-Temple practice is explicitly mentioned by five writers between 1837 and 1909⁴⁴ and is the accepted custom in Jerusalem down to our own day.

(2) The most impressive custom in this category is mentioned in over twenty primary sources written between 921–1330 C.E. and has been discussed by over forty scholars beginning with the publication of the first genizah fragment by Harkavy in 1876.⁴⁵ According to these sources, Jews would gather in large numbers on the Mount of Olives on the three pilgrim festivals and especially on *Hoshanah Rabbah*. They would begin by making a circuit around the gates of Jerusalem reciting special prayers and then ascend to the Mount of Olives. There they would perform seven *hakkafot* around a special sacred stone while reciting the traditional *Hoshanot* poems. The priests would wear special clothing. The *Gaon of Eretz Yisrael* would stand on the special stone and declare the dates of the festivals, bless the Diaspora Jews who had donated money to the Palestinian *yeshivot*, and excommunicate sinners such as the Karaites. It is difficult to reconstruct all of the elements of this fascinating ceremony, but it is clear that during the tenth and eleventh centuries the Mount of Olives became a surrogate Temple Mount on which Jews imitated specific laws and customs of the Second Temple.⁴⁶

D. Laws and Customs whose Aim was to Maintain the Chastity of the Jews of Jerusalem

A number of the eighteenth-century *takkanot* of Jerusalem are aimed at maintaining a high level of chastity and sexual purity in the city. Only further study will reveal if such laws were limited to that period of time.

(1) A *takkanah* of 1730 rules that “no woman shall remain in the synagogue for the final *kaddish* neither at *shaharit*, *minhah*, or *ma’ariv*.”⁴⁷ The obvious goal was to prevent men from looking at or mingling with the women after services.

(2) Beginning in 1798, we hear of a custom that any girl under the age of twelve may not be married within the city, but rather the wedding is held at a nearby village.⁴⁸ It was, apparently, considered unseemly to marry a girl under the age of twelve in the holy city of Jerusalem.

(3) Finally, lest we think that men escaped this trend, a *takkanah* of 1749 ruled that single men between the age of twenty and sixty had to get married within four months. If not, they had to leave Jerusalem forthwith in order to seek a livelihood and a wife.⁴⁹

E. Laws and Customs that Express the Jewish Love for the City of Jerusalem

The Jews of Jerusalem and Jewish pilgrims developed various customs that expressed their love for Jerusalem in general, and for the Temple Mount and Western Wall in particular:

(1) Beginning in the twelfth century we hear of many customs associated with the Western Wall. Jews visiting the Wall would recite specific passages from the Bible and the Mishnah related to the Temple and the Sacrifices⁵⁰ as well as special prayers composed by well-known rabbis.⁵¹

(2) R. Moshe Reisher reports in 1868 that

it is the custom [in Jerusalem] to circle the city on *Hol Hamo'ed*—men, women, and children—in order to fulfill the verse (Psalms 48:13): “Walk around Zion, circle it, count its towers” and this is an ancient custom.⁵²

Conclusion

As many have noted, Jewish tradition has always stressed that Torah study and theory must be grounded in practice.⁵³ The Jewish attitude towards Jerusalem is in keeping with this approach. Love for the city of Jerusalem was not just studied in the Bible and Talmud and mentioned in the liturgy. It was expressed in the concrete form of laws and customs before the Destruction, after the Destruction throughout the Diaspora, and within the city from 70 C.E. until the present.

NOTES

1. By “Jewish,” we mean Pharisaic or Rabbinic. For Jerusalem in the Dead Sea Scrolls, see L. Schiffman, “Jerusalem in the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in *The Centrality of Jerusalem: Historical Perspectives*, edited by M. Poorthuis and Ch. Safrai (Kampen, the Netherlands: Kok Pharos, 1996), pp. 73–88.

2. For lists of these customs see J. D. Eisenstein, ed., *Otzar Yisrael* 5 (New York, 1907–1913): 207–213 (Hebrew); Cecil Roth, ed., *Encyclopedia Judaica* 9 (Jerusalem: Keter, 1972), pp. 1553–1556; and I. Schepansky, *Or Hamizrah* 31 (5743): 245–272 (Hebrew). They have been studied critically by L. Finkelstein in: *Alexander Marx Jubilee Volume*, edited by S. Lieberman, Hebrew Section (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1950), pp. 351–369; S. Bialoblocki in *Alei Ayin: Essays Presented to Shlomo Zalmen Schocken* (Jerusalem: Schocken, 5708–5712), pp. 25–46 (Hebrew); A. Guttman in *Fifth World Congress of Jewish Studies* 3 (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 1972), pp. 67–79 (Hebrew) and again in *HUCA* XL–XLI (1969–1970): 251–275; and S. Safrai, “Jerusalem in the Halacha of the Second Temple Period,” in *The Centrality of Jerusalem*, pp. 94–113.

3. T Nega'im 6:2, ed. Zuckerman, 625; Avot D'rabi Nathan, I, chap. 35, ed. Schechter, p. 104; *ibid.*, II, chap. 39, p. 107; B Bava Kamma 82b.

4. E.g., the regulations regarding gardens, dunghills, and chickens seem to be contradicted by T Bava Kamma 8:10, ed. Lieberman, pp. 38–39; M Ma'aserot 2:5; and M Bava Kamma 7:7.

5. Guttman, *HUCA*, 274.

6. S. Safrai, p. 95. See, for example, sounding the *shofar* and waving the *lulav* discussed in Safrai, pp. 108–113.

7. See, for example, Y. Z. Kahana, *Studies in the Responsa Literature* (Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1973), pp. 436–438 (Hebrew) and Y. Schwartz, *Aveilut Hahurban* (Jerusalem: Dvar Yerushalayim, 5744) pp. 57–105 (Hebrew).

8. See Bava Batra 60b (ashes); Magen David to Orach Hayyim 560, subpar. 4 (the verse); and J. Z. Lauterbach, *HUCA* II (1925): 351–380 (breaking the glass).

9. Lauterbach, p. 375 and n. 36.

10. R. Charif and S. Raz, eds., *Jerusalem: the Eternal Bond* (Tel Aviv: Don Publishing House, 1977), p. 70.

11. See D. Sperber, *Minhagei Yisrael* 4 (Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1995), pp. 143–149 (Hebrew) for previous literature as well as illustrations.
12. I. Gafni, *Cathedra* 4 (5737), pp. 113–120 (Hebrew).
13. For this belief, see, for example, Pesikta Rabbati, Piska 31, ed. Ish-Shalom, 147a and Ma'aseh Daniel, ed. Even-Shemuel, *Midrishei Ge'ulah* (Tel Aviv: Mossad Bialik, 5703), p. 225.
14. See, for example, B. Klar, *Megillat Ahimaaz* (Jerusalem: Tarshish, 1974), p. 37 (Hebrew); J. Mann, *The Jews in Egypt and Palestine Under the Fatamid Caliphs* I (London: Oxford University Press, 1920), pp. 165–166 and II (1922), p. 191; M. Gil, *Palestine During the First Muslim Period* (634–1099) I (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 1983), pp. 517–518 (Hebrew); I. Schepansky, *Eretz Yisrael in the Responsa Literature* I (Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1966), pp. 189–192, 433–440 (Hebrew).
15. N. Wieder, *Islamic Influences on Jewish Worship* (Oxford: East and West Library, 1947), p. 73 (Hebrew); *Responsa Hatam Sofer*, Yoreh Deah, no. 332 (Hebrew); Y. Y. Greenwald, *Kol Bo Al Aveilut* (Jerusalem and New York: Feldheim, 1973), pp. 177–178; Y. M. Tukichinsky, *Gesher Hahayim* I (Jerusalem: Solomon, 5720²), p. 138 (Hebrew).
16. For the origins of this custom, see S. Glick, *Light and Consolation: The Development of Jewish Customs of Consolation Following Bereavement* (Efrat: Keren Ori, 1993), pp. 35, 149 (Hebrew).
17. T Berakhot 3:15–16, ed. Lieberman, pp. 15–16 and parallels.
18. F. Landsberger, *HUCA* XXVIII (1957): 181–203; M. Chiat, *Handbook of Synagogue Architecture* (Chico, California: Scholars Press, 1982), p. 338; J. Wilkinson, *PEQ* 116 (1984): 16–34.
19. Rambam, Tefillah 5:3 and Orah Hayyim 94:1.
20. B Berakhot 31a; Rambam, Tefillah 5:6; Orah Hayyim 90:4.
21. I. Z. Kahana, ed., *Rabbi Meir Ben Barukh (Maharam) of Rottenberg: Responsa, Rulings, and Customs* I (Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1957), p. 194, no. 152 (Hebrew).
22. Zekhariah 7:1–8:19; M. Ta'anit 4:6; D. Golinkin in *Responsa of the Va'ad Halakhah of the Rabbinical Assembly of Israel* I (Jerusalem: The Rabbinical Assembly and the Masorti Movement, 1986), pp. 29–34 (Hebrew).
23. M Ta'anit 4:7; B Yevamot 43b; Y. Gartner, *The Evolvement of Customs in the World of Halacha* (Jerusalem: Hemed Press, 1995), pp. 9–49 (Hebrew).
24. See Orah Hayyim 549–559 for the many laws and customs of the Ninth of Av.
25. A. Ya'ari, *Letters from the Land of Israel* (Ramat Gan: Massada, 1971), p. 372 (Hebrew); M. Reisher, *Sha'arei Yerushalayim* (Lemberg, 1869), p. 49b (Hebrew); Y. Gellis, *Minhagei Eretz Yisrael* (Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1968), pp. 159, 161 (Hebrew).
26. See B. Cohen, *Law and Tradition in Judaism* (New York: Ktav, 1969), pp. 167–181 for a good historical survey and M. Feinstein, *Igrot Moshe*, Orah Hayyim I (New York, 1959), no. 166 for an Orthodox responsum.
27. Bayyit Hadash to Tur Orah Hayyim 224, s.v. misefer ha'eshkol. I have yet to locate the primary source.
28. T Sotah 15:11–12, ed. Lieberman, pp. 243–244 and cf. the parallels listed there.
29. Rambam, Ta'anit 5:12–15; Orah Hayyim 560; and Schwartz (above, note 7), pp. 69–76.
30. Peri Hadash to Orah Hayyim 496, subpar. 2, no. 22.
31. A. David, ed., *Alei Sefer* 16 (5750), pp. 110–111 along with a correction, 18 (5755–56), p. 181.
32. L. Ginzberg, *Geonica* II (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1909), p. 52 (Hebrew); L. Ginzberg, *Ginzei Schechter* II (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1929), pp. 555–556 (Hebrew).
33. A. H. Freimann, "Takkanot of Jerusalem," in *Sefer Dinaburg*, edited by Y. Baer, J. Guttmann, and M. Schwab (Jerusalem: Kiryat Sefer, 5709), pp. 209, 213 (Hebrew).
34. Ya'ari, p. 372.

35. R. Natan ben Yehiel, *Sefer Ha'arukh*, s.v. *hatan*; Rabbeinu Bahya to Gen. 24:3; R. Shemtob Gaguine, *Keter Shem Tob* (Kaidan, 5694), pp. 300–302.
36. For parallel yet different traditions, see Semahot 9:19, ed. Higger, pp. 175–176 and Y Mo'ed Kattan 3:7, 83b-c.
37. The codes are Ramban's quoted by Maggid Mishneh to the Rambam, Ta'anivot 5:16; Rosh to Mo'ed Kattan, Chapter 3, par. 64; and Orah Hayyim 561 and Yoreh De'ah 340:38. For actual testimonies, see: Sifrei Devarim 43, ed. Finkelstein, p. 95 and parallels; Ya'ari (above, note 25), pp. 78, 127, 155, 481–482; J. D. Eisenstein, *Ozar Massaoth* (New York, 1926), pp. 66–67, 99 (Hebrew); and R. Hammer, *The Jerusalem Anthology: A Literary Guide* (Philadelphia and Jerusalem: Jewish Publication Society, 1995), p. 227.
38. Ya'ari, p. 127.
39. A. Stewart and C. W. Wilson, eds., *Itinerary from Bordeaux to Jerusalem* (London: Palestine Pilgrims' Text Society, 1896), pp. 21–22. And cf. Jerome (ca. 386–420) in his commentary to Zephaniah 1:15ff. translated into Hebrew by Gil (above, note 14), p. 57.
40. There is considerable disagreement as to whether the *Avelei Tziyon* were Rabbanites or Karaites. For sources and discussion, see Mann (above, note 14), pp. 47–49, 61; S. Poznanski, *Yerushalayim* 10 (5674), pp. 90–91 (Hebrew); M. Zucker, in *Sefer Hayovel L'rabi Hanokh Albeck* (Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1963), pp. 378–401 (Hebrew); Y. Gartner, pp. 15–49; and H. Ben-Shammai, in *Knesset Ezra . . . Studies Presented to Ezra Fleischer*, edited by S. Elizur et al. (Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi and Ben-Zvi Institute, 1994), pp. 191–234.
41. Reisher, p. 49a; A. M. Luncz, *Yerushalayim* I (5642), p. 9, n. 21 (Hebrew); E. Cohen-Reiss, *Mizikhronot Ish Yerushalayim* (Tel Aviv: Shoshani, 5693), pp. 60–61 (Hebrew); B. Yadler, *B'tuv Yerushalayim* (Benei Berak: Nezhah, 5727), p. 348 (Hebrew); E. Waldenberg, *Responsa Tzitz Eliezer*, XV, no. 33, par. 3 (Hebrew); P. Kidron, *In Jerusalem* (Dec. 12, 1986): 18; Y. Mazor and M. Taube, *Yuval* VI (1994): 165. My thanks to Ya'akov Mazor of the Jewish Music Research Center of the Hebrew University for a few of these references.
42. Bava Kamma 82b and cf. the parallels cited above, note 3.
43. R. Eliezer Waldenberg, *Sefer Even Ya'akov* (at the end of *Tzitz Eliezer*, V, Jerusalem, 5745), pp. 21–22 (Hebrew).
44. Ya'ari, p. 372; E. Cohen-Reiss, p. 56; Luncz, p. 12; and Tukichinsky, p. 88.
45. The most recent discussions are those of E. Reiner in *Tarbiz* 56 (5747): 279–290 (Hebrew); *Moreshet Derekh* 12 (Dec.-Jan. 1986): 7–12 (Hebrew); and in his doctoral dissertation *Aliyah Valiyah Laregel L'erezt Yisrael 1099–1517* (Jerusalem, 5748), pp. 179–198 (Hebrew) which was reprinted without the footnotes in *Ariel* 83–84 (Feb. 1992): 220–235 (Hebrew).
46. For some of the Second-Temple parallels, see M Sukkah 4:5; B Sanhedrin 11a; and Barukh 1:10–14. (My thanks to Prof. Martin Goodman for the last reference.)
47. Freimann, pp. 208, 210.
48. Schepansky, p. 269, n. 136.
49. "Takkanot Yerushalayim," in I. Badhab, *Kovetz Hayerushalmi* III (5691): 52a (Hebrew).
50. Y. Y. Yehudah, *Zion* 3 (5689), pp. 135, 136, 140, 141 (Hebrew).
51. See, for example, R. Ishtori Hafarhi, *Kaftor Vaferah*, edited by A. M. Luncz (Jerusalem, 1897), p. 114 (Hebrew).
52. Reisher, p. 47b.
53. See, for example, M Avot 4:5; Avot D'rabi Natan, I, chap. 24, ed. Schechter, p. 78; Sifrei Devarim 48, ed. Finkelstein, p. 113; Vayikra Rabbah 35:7, ed. Margaliyot, p. 826 and parallels.

Jerusalem: The Christian Holy City

ROBERT L. WILKEN

CHRISTIAN JERUSALEM IS AT ONCE A FACT OF HISTORY and a work of the imagination. The actual city, the place where King David ruled and Jesus of Nazareth was crucified, is irrevocably part of Christian memory. What happened there, whether one thinks of the siege of Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C.E., the destruction of the Temple by the Romans in 70 C.E., or the advent of Muslim rule in the seventh century, is no less constitutive of the Christian past than of Jewish history. When the Persians occupied Jerusalem in 614 C.E. it was a Christian monk from Mar Saba who wrote a lament mourning the destruction of the city. What he lamented was not a heavenly city, the new Jerusalem, but the actual city of stone and wood, its marble columns and mosaic floors, its magnificent portals, and of course the temple of God, the holy Anastasis. John the Almsgiver, patriarch of Alexandria, lamented the Persian conquest of Jerusalem not for one day, not for a week, not for a month, but for a full year. "Wailing and groaning bitterly, he strove by his lamentations to outdo Jeremiah, who of old lamented the capture of *this same city*, Jerusalem."¹

But for Christians Jerusalem is also the city of Psalm 87, "Glorious things are spoken of you O city of God," and Isaiah 60, "And nations shall come to your light," a spiritual and theological reality, that came into being with the coming of Christ. When Christians pray the words of Psalm 46, "There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most high," they think of the Church, not the city located on the edge of the Judean desert. The sublime words and soaring images of the psalms and prophets, though anchored in the singular hopes of the ancient Israelites, brought into existence something that was not there previously. Isaiah's Jerusalem (and the Jerusalem of the Apocalypse) is unlike any city that ever existed. It will be a city in which "the Lord will be [the] everlasting light" (Isaiah 60:19).

The spiritual Jerusalem of Christian prayer would, however, never have come into being had things not taken place in the historical city. Just as it is not possible to tell the Christian story without reference to time, "crucified under Pontius Pilate," in the words of the creed, so one cannot speak of the Christian mysteries without reference to place. When Cleopas and another disciple met Jesus on the road to Emmaus, Cleopas said to him, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these

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days?" (Luke 24:18). From the very beginning Christian belief was oriented to events that had taken place in Jerusalem. Early on this topographical fact embedded itself deep within the Christian memory, so much that in the second century a Christian bishop could say that Jesus was crucified "in the middle of Jerusalem."² Where Jesus suffered and died and was buried helped impose order on the memory of his life and sowed seeds for the sanctification of space.

The Christian Church had its beginnings in the city of Jerusalem. In Jerusalem the first Christian martyr, Stephen, met his death, and in the fourth century a great church was built in Jerusalem to house his relics and honor his memory. In a sermon preached in Jerusalem in the fifth century to venerate Stephen, Hesychius, a presbyter in Jerusalem, declaimed: "Among us Stephen fixed his courtyards and his tents, among us he received the lot of his ministry and the part of his martyrdom." Only Christians whose home was Jerusalem could say that these things have been accomplished "among us."³

It is this identification with the actual city of Jerusalem, its saints and martyrs, its holy places and history, that gives Palestinian monasticism a singular place in the history of Christian Jerusalem. For the monks of Palestine did not come to Jerusalem as pilgrims, to worship at the holy places and carry home tales of the wonders they had seen; they came to live in the desert near Jerusalem, to make this land their home, to build communities of faith and piety contiguous to that place where God was shown forth.

The first monks in Palestine, had little interest in the desert surrounding Jerusalem. Hilarion, whom Jerome calls the "founder and teacher of this way of life [monasticism]" in this "province," i.e., Palestine, came from a tiny village Thabatha five miles south of Gaza. Hence Hilarion modeled his way of life on Egyptian practice, i.e., on the example of Antony. On one occasion (but only on one, according to Jerome) Hilarion went up to Jerusalem to venerate the "holy places," but he chose *not* to live in the desert of Jerusalem. "The blessed Hilarion, a Palestinian who lived in Palestine, only set eyes on Jerusalem for a single day, lest one who lived so close to the holy places appear to despise them, yet . . . he did not wish to appear to confine God within prescribed limits."⁴ Hilarion believed he would be as close to God in the desert near his home as he would be in Judea.

The first monk to settle in the Judean desert was Chariton, a native of Iconium in Asia Minor (present-day Konya) who came to Jerusalem as a pilgrim in the fourth century. In contrast to Hilarion, he seems to have made his home in the Judean desert *because* it was close to Jerusalem. By the end of the fourth century, during the reign of emperor Theodosius (379–395), the presence of the "holy places" in Jerusalem and vicinity had begun to beckon wealthy and well-connected men and women from the West, e.g., Jerome, Melania, Paula, Rufinus.

But the future of monasticism in Palestine was not with monks from the west. At the beginning of the fifth century, Euthymius, a monk from Armenia, made the long journey from his native land to settle permanently in the Judean

desert. Unlike urbane intellectuals like Jerome, who came to the Holy Land to investigate biblical geography and to impress friends in Rome by transmitting Eastern learning in Latin dress, Euthymius' only desire was to live and pray in the desert that touched the Holy City. His sentiment was like that of T. S. Eliot on his visit to Little Gidding. "You are not here to verify,/ Instruct yourself, or inform curiosity/ Or carry report. You are here to kneel/ Where prayer has been valid."

Euthymius's life, and that of his industrious disciple Sabas, were written by Cyril, a native of Palestine from the city of Scythopolis a few miles south of the sea of Galilee in the Jordan valley, and the first self-consciously Palestinian writer in Christian history. Cyril's book (*The Lives of the Palestinian Monks*) takes its shape from *place*, the desert that was contiguous with Jerusalem the holy city. There were deserts aplenty in Egypt, in Syria, in Cappadocia, in Armenia, but only this desert was called "the desert of Jerusalem" or "the desert east of the holy city," "the desert of the holy city" or simply the "dear desert."

Cyril begins his account of the monks of the Judean desert with the arrival of Euthymius in Palestine in 405 C.E. "Our great father Euthymius led by the Holy Spirit came to Jerusalem in the 29th year of his life and adored the Holy Cross and the Holy Anastasis and the other holy places. He visited the God-fearing fathers who lived in the desert, and as he learned the virtue and way of life of each one, he stamped this on his own soul. Then he *came to live* at the Laura at Pharan six miles from the Holy City."⁵

Euthymius sowed the seed in the "desert of Jerusalem," but his disciple, Sabas, would nurture the young plants, uproot the weeds, hoe and cut and prune, and bring the garden to full bloom. Euthymius was a "lover of solitude" who desired only "to commune with God in silence through prayer."⁶ Sabas, however, was a "jolly builder," as the Byzantinist H. G. Beck called him. Unlike Euthymius he was no recluse. He loved the sound of the hammer and saw, the scrape of a trowel on stone.

Of him Cyril writes: "Eager to advance from glory to glory, conceiving in his heart the ascent to God, and completing ten years in his monastery, he had the God-pleasing desire to go to the Holy city and to live the solitary life in the desert surrounding it. For it was necessary through him by colonizing it to fulfill the prophecies about it of the sublime Isaiah."⁷ The term translated "colonize" (*polisai*) means "build" or "found" a city (*polis*), and is seldom used in early Christian literature. It does, however, occur in Athanasius's *Life of Antony*, a work that Cyril knew. In Cyril, however, it has a much more particular reference. It refers to the desert of Elijah, John the Baptizer, and Jesus, and the work of colonization is seen as the fulfillment of biblical prophecy. "The Lord will comfort you O Zion, and give courage to all its deserted, and will make her wilderness like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the voice of song" (Isaiah 51:3).

Though the monks lived in the desert, Jerusalem was only a short walk from their monasteries, and the city itself, its churches and holy places and

history, was never far from their minds. The key text for understanding the attitudes of the Palestinian monks to Jerusalem is found in a petition sent by the monks to Emperor Anastasios at the height of the controversy over the dogmatic definition of the person of Christ. Elias the patriarch of Jerusalem refused to support the emperor when he deposed Macedonius, the Chalcedonian patriarch of Constantinople. To mollify the emperor he sent his famous monk, holy Sabas, on an embassy to Constantinople to plead the Chalcedonian cause and to insure, according to Cyril, that the “*mother of the churches* be protected from all disturbance.”⁸ It was an uncommon assignment for this man of the desert.

Leaving his responsibilities in Judea, Sabas traveled to Constantinople where he stayed the winter pressing his case before the emperor. Anastasius was unmoved. He removed Elias from office, and, over the protest of the monks, exiled him to Aila (Elath) on the Gulf of Aqaba, a garden of delight for twentieth-century sun-worshippers, but to a bishop in the sixth century a miserable and inhospitable town on the edge of civilization.

On his return to Jerusalem, Sabas and Theodosius, the leader of the cenobitic communities in Palestine, took it upon themselves to address a petition directly to the emperor:

Theodosius and Sabas, Archimandrites, and all the other abbots and monks who dwell in the Holy City of God and all the desert around it and the vicinity of the Jordan, send this petition to the God beloved and very pious emperor, Augustus and Pantokrator by God's grace, Flavius Anastasius, friend of Christ. The king of all, God and ruler of all things, Jesus Christ, only Son of God, has entrusted to your authority the scepter of rule over all things after him, to arrange, through your piety, the bond of peace for all the holy churches, but especially for the mother of the churches, Zion, where was revealed and accomplished for the salvation of the world, the great mystery of piety. . . . From that precious and supernatural mystery of Christ, through the victorious and precious cross and life-giving Anastasis, indeed all the holy and adorable places, receiving by tradition from above and from the beginning through the blessed and holy apostles, the true confession, a confession without illusion, and faith, we, the *dwellers of this Holy Land*, have kept it invulnerable and inviolable in Christ, and by the grace of God, we maintain it always without being intimidated in any way by our adversaries.⁹

They express their astonishment that the emperor, who had been nourished in the true faith, has allowed “such turmoil and trouble to be poured over the Holy City of Jerusalem, to such an extent that the *mother of all the churches*, Zion, and the Holy Anastasis of our God and Savior . . . has become a common place. . . .” Jerusalem is the “eye and light of all the world” and “we the inhabitants of Jerusalem, as it were, *touch with our own hands* each day the truth through these holy places in which the mystery of the incarnation of our great God and savior took place. How then, after more than five hundred years after the savior's presence among us, can we Jerusalemites learn the faith anew?”¹⁰

The language of this petition is without precedent in Christian history. Many of its central ideas had been germinating for generations, but here for the first time they are united in a series of theological conceptions that bring

together history, practice, and belief. Already in the middle of the fifth century, at the time of the council of Chalcedon, no less a figure than Leo the Great, Bishop of Rome (d. 461), had appealed to the testimony of those places “by which the whole world is taught” as evidence of the truth of the doctrine of the “two natures” formulated at the Council of Chalcedon.¹¹

There is, however, a notable difference between Leo and the monks of the Judean desert. Leo is interested only in the theological significance of the “holy places;” he shows no interest in the Christian community that lived in Jerusalem. For Leo, the holy places do not imply “Holy Land,” and certainly not the authority of the bishop of Jerusalem. He would not have suffered himself to be instructed in matters of faith by the bishop of Jerusalem or the monks of the Judean desert. But it is precisely this link between place and people that is central to the petition to emperor Anastasius.

In the petition the earlier pilgrimage piety centering on “holy places” has given way to a theology that includes the Christian community living in Jerusalem and vicinity, the bishop, priests, monks, and faithful. Only the “inhabitants of Jerusalem” have a tangible relation to the places, for they are able to “touch” with their own hands the truth through these holy places. The city conferred on its inhabitants a unique status. The point of the petition is not that the emperor should venerate the “places,” but that he should show deference to the Christians living in Jerusalem. Contrast the words of Jerome two hundred years earlier: “It is not being in Jerusalem, but living a good life there that is praiseworthy.”¹² Remember that the monk Hilarion chose *not* to live in the vicinity of Jerusalem.

The purpose of the petition to Emperor Anastasios was of course political; it had to do with a struggle over the theological definition of the person of Christ that had gone back to the early fourth century. But its language is sacramental. The arresting term is of course “touch.” Its appearance here recalls the opening lines of the epistle of 1 John where the same term is used. “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life. . . .”

Though the term “touch” is the same in both texts, what is being touched is of course not the same. John, a disciple of Jesus, was speaking about the person of Jesus, who could be embraced by the disciples during his earthly life, and touched after his Resurrection. According to the Gospel of Luke, Jesus addressed his disciples; “Why are you troubled and why do questionings rise in your hearts? See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; touch me and see” (Luke 24:39). But the monks of Palestine were not speaking of touching Jesus; what they could touch were the places and things which Christ’s body had touched during his days in Jerusalem, the cross on which Jesus had died, the stone of the tomb in which he had been buried, the walls of the room in which he had celebrated the Last Supper, the street on which he had carried the cross to his death. In the words of Paulinus of Nola: “No other sentiment draws

people to Jerusalem than the desire to *see* (*videant*) and *touch* (*continguant*) the places where Christ was physically present, and to be able to say from their own experience, 'We have gone into his tabernacle, and have worshipped in the places where his feet stood.'¹³ Through seeing and touching the places one sees and touches the "truth"—that is, Christ.

Another Palestinian monk, John of Damascus who lived at Mar Saba in the eighth century, was to give these ideas philosophical and theological coherence. In his treatise *On the Images*, written at the height of the iconoclastic controversy, he treats the "holy places" in Jerusalem and "holy things" associated with Christ in the same terms he uses for icons, i.e., holy pictures. Just as one bows before "images of Christ, the incarnate God, our Lady, the theotokos and mother of the son of God and the saints," so one venerates these holy places. Among the places "by which God has accomplished our salvation" John mentions the cave in Bethlehem, the wood of the cross, the nails, the lance, the seamless tunic, the holy tomb, the stone of the sepulcher, Mt. Zion and the Mt. of Olives, the pool of Bethesda, the garden at Gethsemane. All these are to be "honored and venerated" as "God's holy temples." His term for such places is "receptacles of divine power."¹⁴ Through things that can be seen and touched, God is known and made present to human beings. This sacramental principle, founded of course on the Incarnation, is not confined to the bread and wine of the Eucharist but is here extended to other material objects, to icons, and to things and places found in Jerusalem.

The heavenly Jerusalem now had an image on earth. In earlier Christian tradition the Jerusalem above was the "mother of believers," but for the Judean monks the church of the earthly Jerusalem is the "mother of the churches." By the sixth century the Christian monks of Jerusalem and the Judean desert had created a new spiritual and political fact within the Christian world. These monks had a cool indifference to the stratagems and blandishments of the emperor in Constantinople. For them Jerusalem, not Rome, was the apostolic see par excellence. Since the time of the "savior's presence among us," they insisted, the inhabitants of the Holy Land have handed on the faith pure and undefiled.

The petition to Anastasius is the most luminous text on Jerusalem from the monks of Palestine, but I would be remiss were I not to call attention to two other monastic writers who offer a different, but no less significant, perspective on the attitude of Palestinian monks to Jerusalem. I refer to the monk from Mar Saba, Strategos, whose work the "capture of Jerusalem" is an account of the Persian conquest, and a poem of the monk Sophronius who was patriarch of Jerusalem when the Muslims took the city in 638.

Strategos wrote a lament, a dirge, over the city after the Persians occupied it, pillaging its churches and killing Christians. What impresses the reader of this work is the intensity of feeling reflected in his account of the occupation. The text reaches its emotional zenith as the patriarch of Jerusalem, Zachariah, bound, is led with a band of captives down into the Kidron valley and up the Mount of Olives where the fearful band halted briefly. Strategos writes, "They

raised their eyes and beheld Jerusalem ablaze with flames and began to lament with tears. Some struck their faces, and others threw ashes over their heads, and some threw dirt in their faces, and some pulled hair from their scalps. Some struck their breasts, and others lifted their hands to heaven crying out and saying, 'Have mercy on us, O Lord; have mercy on your city, O Lord, have mercy on your altars. . . . O Lord, look how your enemies are rejoicing in the destruction of your city and of your altars.'¹⁵

When Zachariah saw the people throwing ashes over their heads and beating their breasts, he raised his hand to calm them. Before being led away "he turned to Zion, and as a husband consoles his wife, so Zacharias, comforting Zion as he wept, extended his hands, crying out and saying, 'O Zion, with a sorrowful word that makes one weep I speak peace to you; peace be with you Oh Jerusalem, peace be with you oh *Holy Land*, peace on the whole land; Christ who chose you will deliver you. . . . O Zion, what hope do I have, how many years before I will see you again.

What use is there for me, an old man, to hope? How will I see you again? I will not see your face again. I beseech you, O Zion, to remember me when Christ comes to you. O Zion, do not forget me your servant, and may your creator not forget you. For if I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand wither. Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth if I do not remember you. Peace on you, O Zion, you who were my city, and now I am made a stranger to you.'¹⁶

The other lament over Jerusalem was also written during the time of the Persian conquest. Composed by Sophronius, who became patriarch of Jerusalem after the Byzantine emperor Heraclius had recaptured the city, it belongs to a quite different literary tradition, the Greek *anacreonticon*, a showy and pretentious genre of poetry favored by rhetors in this period. Even though Sophronius's language is ostentatious and affected, the poem has an immediacy to it. One scholar observed, somewhat myopically, that the poem is a "tearful lamentation" that is "more credit to Sophronius' feelings than his talents as a historian." But that is precisely the point; what is most interesting about the poem is not the bits of information it provides about the occupation, but what it tells us about Sophronius's love for Jerusalem. He sings:

Holy City of God
Home of the most valiant saints
Great Jerusalem
What kind of lament should I offer you?

Children of the blessed Christians
Come to mourn high crested Jerusalem

In the face of such tragedy
The flow of my tears is too brief

The dirge of my heart
Too measured before such suffering.

Nevertheless, I shall sound forth a lament
Weaving my garment of groans for you
Because you have suffered such brigandage
Concealing the rushing forth of my tears.¹⁷

Like Strategos, Sophronius views Jerusalem as a political as well as a religious center. In Strategos's threnody it was the "great city of the Christians," and in Sophronius's poem it is the "great Jerusalem" and the city of the "children of the blessed Christians." In the war between the Roman and Sassanid empires, Jerusalem was the emblem of the Christian empire. The capital of the empire may have been located at Constantinople, but its spiritual shield and buckler was Jerusalem. Sophronius presents the occupation of Jerusalem as an attack on Rome, using the ancient term Edom.

Deceitfully the Mede
Came from terrible Persia
Pillaging cities and villages
Waging war against the ruler of Edom [Rome]

Advancing on the Holy Land
The malevolent one came
To destroy the city of God, Jerusalem.

All together
They raised on high their holy hands
Beseeching the Lord Christ
To fight on behalf of their city¹⁸

The profound transformation in Christian attitudes toward Jerusalem is summed up in one sentence from Strategos's *Capture of Jerusalem*. "And the Jerusalem above wept over the Jerusalem below." For Christians these terms, "the Jerusalem above" and the "Jerusalem below" derive from St. Paul: "Now Hagar . . . corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. But the Jerusalem above is free and she is our mother" (Galatians 4:25-26). Paul's allegory was taken over by Melito of Sardis in the second century. In his paschal homily he wrote: "The Jerusalem below was precious, but it is worthless now because of the Jerusalem above."¹⁹ Five hundred years later, after the building of Christian Jerusalem, and generations of Christian life in the city, a monk from Mar Saba could write: "The Jerusalem above wept over the Jerusalem below." So great was the sorrow in heaven that "on that day a great darkness came over the city" and people were minded of the darkness at Christ's crucifixion.

It is now recognized that the monks of Palestine are a significant chapter in the history of Jerusalem and the Holy land. What I have suggested is that they are a precious repository not only of historical information and theological ideas but also of profound human emotions. It is not a little paradoxical, and at the same time alluring, that it was monks who wrote with such passion and fervor about the actual city of Jerusalem. After all, these were men who had left home and family and goods, all the natural bonds that kindle human affections and bind us to place, to seek God in a place they had never seen. Yet it is these same men, solitaries given to lives of prayer and fasting, who in antiquity conveyed the deepest feelings of Christians about the earthly Jerusalem. That is why they remain for us not simply witnesses to a distant past; their voices find a place deep within our own hearing. They remind us that to love God alone does not mean turning away from other loves; it deepens and intensifies them. Only in loving the heavenly Jerusalem can we truly love the earthly Jerusalem.

NOTES

1. Leontius of Neapolis, *Life of John the Almsgiver*, 9. Text edited by H. Delehay, "Une vie inédite de Saint Jean l'Aumônier," in *Analecta Bollandiana* 45 (1927): 23.
2. Melito of Sardis, *Paschal Homily* 94.
3. Michael Aubineau, *Les Homélies Festales d'Hésychius de Jérusalem*, in *Subsidia Hagiographia* no. 459 (Brussels, 1978), 1:244. On Christian Jerusalem, see Robert L. Wilken, *The Land Called Holy: Palestine in Christian History and Thought* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).
4. Jerome, *Vita S. Hilarionis eremitae* 14.
5. Cyril of Scythopolis, *Life of Euthymius*, 6. English translation of Cyril's *The Lives of the Palestinian Monks*, by R. M. Price (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1991).
6. Ibid.
7. *Life of Sabas*, 6.
8. *Life of Sabas*, 50.
9. *Life of Sabas*, 57.
10. *Life of Sabas*, 57.
11. Leo, *epist.* 113; 109; 123.
12. Jerome, *epist.* 58.2.
13. Paulinus of Nola, *epist.* 49.14.
14. John of Damascus, *Contra imaginum calumniatores* 3.34.
15. Strategos, *Capture of Jerusalem* 13.14–20. Arabic version (with Latin translation) edited by G. Garitte, *Expugnatio Hierosolymae A.D. 614*, Series Title: *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium* 340 (Louvain: Secretariat du Corpus, 1973).
16. *Capture of Jerusalem* 14.12–16.
17. Sophronius, *Anacreonticon* 14.1–4, edited by M. Gigante, *Sophronii Anacreontica* (Rome: Gismondi, 1957).
18. See Sophronius's *Anacreontica* 19–20.
19. Melito of Sardis, *Paschal Homily* 45.

Jerusalem and Its Temple in the Beginnings of the Christian Movement

E. P. SANDERS

JESUS OF NAZARETH WAS A GALILEAN PROPHET AND healer who was executed on the orders of Pontius Pilate, the Roman prefect of Judea, about the year 30 C.E. After his death, his followers “saw” him in some sense or other, and they became convinced that in a short period of time he would return to establish the kingdom of God. They carried out missionary endeavors to convince others that this was the case. Jesus’ disciples established Jerusalem as their base, but their mission was much wider, and the early Christian movement soon spread to both Jews and Gentiles within Palestine and beyond its borders. We may consider the “beginnings” of Christianity to cover the period from Jesus’s own public career to the first Jewish revolt against Rome (66 to 73 or 74 C.E.). In this period, as we shall see, Jerusalem was of great importance.

After the destruction of the Temple in 70 C.E., the Christian view of the significance of Jerusalem and its Temple began a long process of change. By the time of the composition of the Acts of the Apostles, ca. 90 C.E., Jerusalem was rapidly becoming a romantic symbol of Christianity’s early days. This is an interesting story, but in this paper we shall limit discussion to the only two pre-70 figures for whom we have good and substantial evidence: Paul and, of course, Jesus himself. We shall consider Jerusalem in the thought of each.

Jesus

I assume that Jesus was born into an average Jewish Galilean family, and that he inherited views typical of his time and place. What those views were is now a matter of debate among New Testament scholars.¹ I shall have to content myself with merely describing my own understanding of Jesus’s Galilee. I think that Jews in the Galilee spoke Aramaic as their principal language, that they attended the synagogue on Shabbat, that they were immersed in the Bible and its depiction of Jewish history and God’s will, that the farmers were fairly reliable to tithe and offer first fruits, that most people regularly purified themselves by immersion in *miqva’ot*, and that they made pilgrimage to Jerusalem to attend one of the festivals as often as they reasonably could; while there they offered the appropriate sacrifices.² In the words of Sean Freyne,

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“insofar as any urban center dominated the cultural life of the Galilee, it would seem that it was Jerusalem, not the Hellenistic cities, that had the controlling influence over the majority of the population.”³

If this is true, Jesus inherited the view that Jerusalem and the Temple were of prime importance. Accordingly, I assume that, before he began his public career as healer, prophet, and teacher, Jesus had traveled to Jerusalem several times, that on each trip he spent a week being purified of corpse-impurity, and that he then worshipped in the Temple by presenting birds or quadrupeds to be sacrificed.

Despite this, Jerusalem and its Temple are not major themes of Jesus's teaching as we now have it. The surviving material in the gospels, of course, was collected in Greek, and the gospels were written after the destruction of the Temple. Moreover, they were transmitted and used by an increasingly Gentile Christian movement, for which Jerusalem was not very important. Some material dealing with the Temple and its service may have been lost. There are, however, a few passages attributed to Jesus about Jerusalem and the Temple, all of them favorable. I shall mention the most prominent: (1) Jesus told his followers to be reconciled with other people before presenting a gift at the altar (Matthew 5:23–24). (2) After healing a leper, he told the man to show himself to a priest and to offer for his purification what Moses commanded (Mark 1:40–44). (3) He called the Temple the dwelling place of God (Matthew 23:21). (4) He forbade swearing by Jerusalem because “it is the city of the great King” (Matthew 5:35). The fifth passage is a little more complicated. It is a lament over Jerusalem: “Jerusalem, Jerusalem, killing the prophets and stoning those who are sent to you! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not!” (Matthew 23:37–39; Luke 13:34–35). This lament is obviously a criticism of Jerusalem *ites*, but it implies the importance of the city itself.

In addition to these five passages, we should also note the lack of negative material about the priesthood. The gospels, especially Matthew, contain passages in which Jesus denounces the Pharisees or the scribes (e.g., Matthew 23:1–36; Mark 12:37–40), but not equivalent passages attacking the priesthood or the sacrificial system. There is, however, an implicit criticism that some priests and Levites cared too much about purity in the story called the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:29–37).

The material in the gospels that is attributed to Jesus was subject to change, expansion, and reduction before it was written in our gospels, and we cannot know with certainty that Jesus himself uttered all the sayings just listed, nor that he never criticized the priesthood. I think, however, that the gospels are reliable in a general way: they have the main themes of Jesus's words and deeds.⁴ In any case, the only information that we have about Jerusalem in the teaching of Jesus is favorable.

If, then, Jesus saw Jerusalem and the Temple in a positive light, why did he, in about the year 30, enter the Temple precincts and overturn some tables

used by moneychangers and sellers of doves (Mark 11:15–19 and parallel passages in the other gospels)? There are three theories. One is that he found these transactions to be defiling and that he thought that some of the Temple officials were dishonest. According to this view, he was a moderate reformer: he approved of the Temple but wanted its administration to be more spiritual and more honest. This view has often seemed self-evident because the gospels quote Jesus as saying, after he overturned the tables, “Is it not written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations’? But you have made it a den of robbers” (Mark 11:17, quoting Isaiah 56:7; Jeremiah 7:11). There are, however, reasons to doubt this interpretation. One is simply that the gospel writers often quote passages from the Hebrew Bible to show that Jesus “fulfilled” them. The saying attributed to Jesus, which conflates two prophetic passages, could easily have been supplied later. More telling is the point mentioned above: as far as we know, Jesus did not otherwise attack the priesthood, the Temple, or Jerusalem. His overturning of the tables was probably the immediate cause of his death, and he must have known, before he did it, that it was a dangerous action. It seems probable, then, that there would be some other indication that he was a cultic reformer if that were the explanation of this last, fatal, gesture.⁵

The second interpretation of the overturning of the tables in the Temple area is that Jesus was a radical reformer: he fundamentally disapproved of major aspects of his native religion, especially those having to do with sacrifices and purity. According to one scholar, for example, “House of prayer for all the nations”—that is, the Gentiles—indicates the reason for Jesus’s action. He wanted Judaism to drop its purity practices, centered on the Temple, and admit Gentiles freely.⁶ Again, however, the other evidence does not support this view. According to the gospels, Jesus limited his own ministry to Israel (Matthew 15:24; cf. Matthew 10:5–6). He had few contacts with Gentiles, and some of these were not overly cordial (Mark 7:24–30; Matthew 15:21–28; the passage includes calling the Gentiles “dogs”). Moreover, we should recall once more Jesus’ favorable references to Jerusalem and the Temple. These do not reveal that he wanted to open the Temple to Gentiles.

The third opinion is that the overturning of the tables should be interpreted in accord with Jesus’ sayings about the destruction of the Temple. In this case, the physical action is a symbolic gesture representing destruction. Sayings predicting or threatening the destruction of the Temple are very deeply embedded in the New Testament traditions about Jesus. According to all three synoptic gospels, he predicted that “Not one stone [of the Temple] will be left on another” (Matthew 24:2; Mark 13:2; Luke 21:6). According to the story of Jesus’s arrest and trial before the high priest and his council, he was first charged with threatening to destroy the Temple, before he was charged with blasphemy (Matthew 26:51; Mark 14:58). While he hung on the cross, some passersby taunted him: “you who would destroy the Temple, save yourself” (Matthew 27:40; Mark 15:29–30). The tradition even appears in Acts, accord-

ing to which the first martyr, Stephen, was accused of saying that Jesus of Nazareth will “destroy this place,” obviously the Temple (Acts 6:14).⁷

It is my own view that Jesus’s act of overturning the tables of moneychangers should be understood in light of these statements about the destruction of the Temple.⁸ Even if someone wishes to maintain the traditional interpretation of the event—that he was cleansing the Temple of dishonesty—it must still be granted that he also threatened or predicted that the Temple would be destroyed. We re-phrase our question: Why would a good and loyal Jew, who believed in the Bible, predict the Temple’s destruction? It is most doubtful that Jesus had suddenly come to the opinion that the slaughter of animals was inappropriate as a way of worshipping God. Nothing in the gospels points in that direction, and his followers were not opposed to the Temple as such; opposition to the Temple is not a feature of any of the descriptions of the earliest Christian movement (Paul’s letters, the gospels and Acts). The best explanation of Jesus’s own view seems to be that he expected the Temple to be destroyed so that, when the kingdom of God arrived, a new one would be built, one made without human hands (“without hands”: Mark 14:58).

Jesus was an eschatological prophet, a prophet who expected God himself to interrupt human history and create a new and better world, one in which Israel was redeemed and restored, and in which the Gentiles too would come to worship the God of Israel.⁹ I shall not elaborate on this general view here, but if it is correct, the prediction of the destruction of the Temple fits perfectly. This eschatological expectation is rare in Jewish literature that is more or less contemporary with Jesus, but it does occur, most notably in the Temple Scroll from Qumran.¹⁰

To summarize: Jesus held fairly conventional views about Jerusalem and the Temple: he thought that they were central. He was, however, an eschatological prophet, and he expected that the Temple would be replaced in the coming kingdom of God.

Paul

We turn now to Paul, a Jew from Asia Minor, who was first a persecutor of the Christian movement and later a convert to it. He became, in his own words, apostle to the Gentiles (Romans 11:13). Paul’s letters constitute the only Christian literature that is certainly pre-70 C.E.

These letters reveal that the disciples of Jesus, all of whom were Galileans, had established Jerusalem, not Galilee, as the center and headquarters of the early movement. Paul had an ambiguous relationship with the Jerusalem apostles, which is revealed in a few sections of his letters. I shall briefly summarize the first two chapters of Galatians, which respond to the charge that he was a second-hand apostle, dependent on Jerusalem, and not an authoritative figure who could make important decisions, such as whether

or not Gentile converts to Christianity had to observe all of the Jewish law. In this conflict, Jerusalem was not the central issue, but nevertheless it reveals the general early Christian assumption that Jerusalem was the natural headquarters of the new movement.

In Galatians, Paul names Peter, James the brother of Jesus, and John as the “pillars” of the church in Jerusalem (Galatians 1:18–19; 2:9). He emphatically insists, however, that his own mission was given to him directly by revelation, and that he was not dependent on the Jerusalem pillars (1:1; 1:11–12; 1:17; 2:6). After the Lord appeared to him, he writes, he went to Arabia, then back to Damascus; he did not even visit Jerusalem until three years later (1:17–18). After fourteen years he made his second trip to Jerusalem. He insists that he was again guided by revelation (not, therefore, by a summons), and he emphasizes that the Jerusalem apostles “added nothing” to him (2:2; 2:6). But he also confesses that he was worried lest he had run in vain (2:2). The meaning of this phrase is not certain. It is not probable that Paul doubted the truth of his message, but he may have wondered whether or not the church was being split into two factions, one Jewish, the other Gentile. In any case, he was eager to prove solidarity between the Gentile converts and Jerusalem, and for this purpose he agreed to take up a collection from his Gentile churches and give it to the poor in Jerusalem (2:10).

I think that we may assume that in these two chapters of Galatians Paul overstated his complete independence, but it is also probable that he was basically telling the truth. At one point in the narration of his dealings with the Jerusalem pillars, he takes an oath: “In what I am writing to you, before God, I do not lie” (1:20). Paul believed in God, and I doubt that he would take an oath before God if he were deliberately lying.

We learn from this a lot about Paul’s personality and something of his career. We see behind the passions of Galatians, however, not only that Paul considered himself to be an emissary of God, commissioned directly from heaven, but also that Jerusalem held the central place in the early Christian movement. If Paul’s mission resulted in a complete rupture with Jerusalem, he would have run in vain. After shaking hands with the pillar apostles and agreeing to take up a collection, he spent the rest of his life, except when he was imprisoned, collecting and delivering money for Jerusalem.

A second aspect of Paul’s letters is, I think, even more interesting and important for our topic. In Paul’s last surviving letter, written to Rome, probably from Corinth, he reflects on his past quarrels and difficulties, his present situation, and his future hopes. Moreover, he describes his vocation, that is, his job. I shall quote a few of the key passages:

Inasmuch as I am apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry in order to make my fellow Jews jealous, and thus I shall save some of them. (Romans 11:13–14)

I want you to understand this mystery, brethren: a hardening has come upon

part of Israel, until the full number of the Gentiles come in, and thus all Israel will be saved. (11:25–26)

I tell you that Christ became a servant to the circumcised to show God's truthfulness, in order to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. . . . Isaiah says, "The root of Jesse shall come, he who rises to rule the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles hope." (15:8–9, 12, quoting Isaiah 11:10)

[I am] a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles in the priestly service of the gospel of God, so that the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit. (15:16)

These passages and others show that Paul set his career within a framework that is very common in Jewish sources from the exilic period through the first century C.E.: at the end of the ages, or the climax of history, the tribes of Israel will be gathered, and the Gentiles will come to Jerusalem, bearing gifts and worshipping the God of Israel.¹¹

At the time he wrote Romans, Paul had finished taking up his collection for Jerusalem, and he and some Gentile delegates were about to take the offering there, before he, Paul, returned to the West. He planned to go to Rome and then on to Spain, so that he would have converted Gentiles over a vast area (Romans 15:22–29). Then the Lord would return, and all Israel, and in fact all Gentiles as well, would be saved (Romans 11:25–32).

But as he reflected on how close this expectation was to fulfillment, he realized that things were not working out as they should. He had done his job, fulfilled his calling—he had won Gentiles. But Peter, James, John, and the others had been less successful in persuading Jews to accept Jesus. This is the implication of much of Romans 11, where Paul states that he "magnifies" his ministry to the Gentiles, "*in order to make [his] fellow Jews jealous*, and thus [he would] save some of them" (Romans 11:13–14). Though he was apostle to the Gentiles, here he assigns himself some role in winning Jews. It is probable that the need to give himself a part in this endeavor came from his realization that Peter and the others had not in fact won enough Jews. The Jewish eschatological scheme that Paul inherited was that first Israel would be gathered, and then the Gentiles would bring gifts and join in the worship of God. But, in Paul's view, the Gentiles were ready first. Then what about the Jews? To meet this problem, Paul reversed the scheme. The Gentiles would come in, and this would make the Jews jealous, so that they would join, and thus he, Paul, apostle to the Gentiles, would manage to save some Jews as well. He would do so indirectly, by creating jealousy, but clearly Peter and James needed some help! This conception is surprising, and so I shall repeat one of the passages:

I want you to understand this mystery, brethren: a hardening has come upon part of Israel, until the full number of the Gentiles come in, and *thus* (*houtos*: in this manner) all Israel will be saved. (11:25–26)

The scheme is reversed, Israel will be saved by Paul's Gentile mission.

The view that Gentiles would be ready for the arrival of the Lord before Jews was, of course, Paul's original contribution to what I have called Jewish restoration theology.¹² But I wish to emphasize once more that the basic scheme was widespread. It appears in the Biblical prophets, and in rather a lot of post-Biblical literature. Above I proposed that Jesus himself had held at least some aspects of this expectation, and Paul's letters confirm its importance in early Christianity, making it even more likely that the basic hope goes back to Jesus. Jerusalem and the Temple were central to the Biblical passages predicting the assembly of the tribes of Israel and the pilgrimage of Gentiles, and thus they were also central to early Christian eschatological hope.

There is a third point to be made about Jerusalem and the Temple in Paul's letters. Already before Paul, early Christians had come to see Jesus's death as an atoning sacrifice. According to Paul's inherited formula, people who believe in Christ are "justified by [God's] grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as an expiation by his blood, to be received by faith" (Romans 3:24–25).¹³ It would be very easy to draw from this view of Jesus's death the conclusion that the sacrifices of the Temple had become superfluous. And Christians did eventually draw that conclusion (for example, in the book called *Hebrews*). We do not, however, see this in Paul's letters. He thought that the coming of Christ annulled those parts of the Jewish law that separated Jews from Gentiles in the Diaspora: circumcision, food, and days. But he did not apply his Christology to the question of Temple worship. He says nothing against it, and in Romans 9:4 he lists "the service"—that is, the service of the Temple—as one of God's important gifts to Israel.

Romans, written just before Paul took the "offering of the Gentiles" to Jerusalem, probably in the late 50s of the first century C.E., is his last surviving letter. According to Acts, when he reached Jerusalem with his Gentiles and their offering, he was accused of taking Greeks into the Temple (21:28). I do not, of course, know that Paul actually did this, but he could have. He could have had the view that the coming of Christ meant not that the Temple was now useless, but rather that Gentiles who believed in him should also have access to it. In any case, there is nothing against the Temple in Paul's letters, and there is the positive point that he saw Jerusalem as the natural end-point of his own mission to the Gentiles.

As I indicated at the outset, there is no other early Christian literature that can be definitely dated prior to the first Jewish revolt against Rome (66–73 C.E.). Romans is, therefore, the last glimpse of the original Christian eschatological hope, which was focused on Jerusalem and the Temple, and which included the prophetic idea of the pilgrimage of the Gentiles to worship the God of Israel. This was an entirely Jewish view, though it included Gentiles in its scope, as did many Jewish views.

What happened, of course, was quite different. Jerusalem was conquered, the Temple was destroyed, and the Lord did not arrive. On the other hand, Gentiles kept joining the new movement. These factors, especially the

last, eventually led to a break between the Christian movement and its Jewish parent. Jerusalem did not disappear from Christian hope, but the intensity and specificity of the original view, as well as its entirely Jewish character, faded and changed in ways that are described by other contributors.

NOTES

1. See my brief summary in "Jesus in Historical Context," *Theology Today* 50 (1993): 429–448.
2. This is the traditional view of Galilean Judaism. For my own treatment of common Judaism, see *Judaism: Practice and Belief* (London: SCM Press/Philadelphia: Trinity Press, 1992).
3. Sean Freyne, "Urban-Rural Relations in First-Century Galilee: Some Suggestions from the Literary Sources," in *The Galilee in Late Antiquity*, edited by Lee I. Levine (New York/Jerusalem: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1992), pp. 75–91, here p. 81.
4. For an account of the problems involved in studying the gospels, tests for "authenticity," and using the material to reconstruct Jesus' career, see E. P. Sanders and Margaret Davies, *Studying the Synoptic Gospels* (London: SCM Press/Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1989), esp. chaps. 20–22.
5. On "cleansing" the Temple (purging it of dishonesty), which is the majority view, see my *Jesus and Judaism* (London: SCM/Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), pp. 61–63.
6. Marcus J. Borg, *Jesus: A New Vision* (New York: Harper and Row, 1987), p. 175. See earlier Borg, *Conflict, Holiness and Politics in the Teaching of Jesus* (New York/Toronto: Edwin Mellen Press, 1984).
7. On the problem of the historicity of this accusation, see Craig Hill, *Hellenists and Hebrews* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), pp. 54–69.
8. *Jesus and Judaism* (London: Allen Lane), ch. 1; *The Historical Figure of Jesus* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1993; Penguin Paperback, 1995), pp. 254–262.
9. *Jesus and Judaism*, ch. 3, pp. 237–41; see also the Index, *s.v.* Jesus: As prophet of restoration. More recently, see my *Historical Figure of Jesus*, pp. 238–239, 259–264.
10. 11QTemple 29.8–10. See further *Jesus and Judaism*, pp. 84–86.
11. On Paul and the eschatological "pilgrimage of the Gentiles," see my *Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), pp. 171–173 and notes 3 & 5 (on pp. 199–200). On Jewish eschatological views of Gentiles, see *Jesus and Judaism*, pp. 213–218.
12. See the Index to *Jesus and Judaism*, *s.v.* Jewish restoration theology.
13. It is generally accepted that Romans 3.25–26 is based on a pre-Pauline formula. See Ben F. Meyer, "The Pre-Pauline Formula in Romans 3.25–26a," *New Testament Studies* 29 (1983): 198–208. The word translated "expiation" is *hilasterion*, which is used in the Septuagint to refer to the lid of the ark of the covenant, on which the blood of the sin-offering was sprinkled on the Day of Atonement (Exodus 25:17; Leviticus 16:15).

Jerusalem and Mecca

H A V A L A Z A R U S - Y A F E H

JERUSALEM AND MECCA ARE TWO OF THE MOST FAMOUS holy cities in the world. An enormous amount of literature and scholarly treatises has been written about each one of them. Nevertheless very little if anything has been done in way of comparative study. Most comparisons deal with the relationship of the sanctity of Jerusalem in Islam to that of Mecca in Islam or with the sanctity of Jerusalem in all three religions. What I shall try to do in this paper is to compare the sanctity of each city in its "natural," original surroundings with the other, and learn from this comparison something more general about each one of the two religions, Judaism and Islam.

Let me start with the similarities between the two holy cities. They are numerous, but I shall mention just three basic ones:

A. According to scholars of both traditions the sanctity of both cities is very ancient and seems to stem from pre-monotheistic times and from a specific part of the city: In Mecca it is the Ka'ba shrine and the small Black Stone in its eastern wall which were ancient sites of pre-Islamic pagan worship; in Jerusalem it is "Aravna's threshing floor" (2 Samuel 23:18ff.) which King David bought and where he erected an altar and burnt offerings to God. This was the place where the temple was erected later by King Solomon, and because of the huge rock in it, it may well have been an early pre-monotheistic place of worship.

B. Both the Temple mount and the Ka'ba infected, as it were, their respective cities with their sanctity. Although these are two very different shrines—at the Ka'ba no offerings are burnt and there is no priesthood in Islam (the sacrifice which ends the pilgrimage is a family feast)—the same process of sanctifying the city took place in both. The cities became holy because God dwelled in each one of them. Of course, the idea that God dwells in any specific place was long ago rejected by both religions. Nevertheless this ancient pre-monotheistic notion held on as a metaphor and the cities became holy because they surrounded the site that God—as the ancient kings did—chose to dwell in, His house or palace as it were. Slowly, but surely the distinction between Temple or Shrine and between city was blurred and the city itself became the holy site. Thus Jerusalem was termed "the city of God, the holiest dwelling place of God most high" (Psalm 45:5) and even the whole country was

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considered sacred because of the same reason. (In Al-Hidjaz as well a huge area of sacred territory surrounds Mecca with the Ka'ba.) A long process of discovering other holy sites in the cities and around them began and pilgrims usually added them to the first goal of their pilgrimage. The pilgrims to the cities and shrines became to be considered as visitors of God Himself and were urged to behave accordingly—everywhere in the city, not only at the Temple or in the Ka'ba Mosque.

C. The pilgrim's behavior in both cities was now regulated in detail, especially in Islam, where no one can enter Mecca and the surrounding holy territory without special purification. At specific points on the borders of the holy territory the Muslim male pilgrim has to wash his whole body, take off his everyday clothes, and put on the white garb of holiness (Ihram). While dressed in this garb the Muslim pilgrim to Mecca is considered to be in a state of holiness and many prohibitions are imposed upon him such as not to wash, shave, cut his hair and nails, or to have sexual relations. Arriving thus in Mecca he has to perform certain rituals at the Ka'ba and near the mosque surrounding it—before he can take off his Ihram garb. This holds true for the pilgrim who arrives in Mecca before the general Hajj pilgrimage starts (for which he will then once more put on the Ihram dress) as well as for the ordinary visitor to Mecca who can never enter the city as a casual visitor.

It is a small step from here to the discussion whether a pilgrim should stay for longer in the holy city—Mecca—a practice that was very common and considered to be a pious and recommendable act. But the more holy the city became in the eyes of the believers, the more some Doctors of Law and mystics hesitated to recommend this act of piety. Here are some of the great Al-Ghazzali's (d.1111) deliberations on this issue:

The very cautious among the Sages did not like people to stay on in Mecca because of three reasons: First, because people may become bored and too familiar with the House [e.g., the Ka'ba] and this will extinguish the flame of reverence in their heart. . . . The second reason is that in order to raise the yearning to come back one has to leave. . . . Therefore someone said "To be in another place while your heart yearns for Mecca and is connected with this House—is better for you than to be in it—while you are bored and your heart is in another place." . . . The third reason is the fear to commit sins in Mecca, which is a very dangerous thing to do as it may bring the wrath of God [upon you] because of the honored place. . . . People say that sins are multiplied in Mecca as are the good deeds [done there] . . . and some people who stayed in Mecca [for longer] never relieved themselves there but used to go every time outside the holy territory to do so; others, who stayed for months, never ever lay down there [to sleep]. . . .

Do not think that being against staying [in the holy city] stands in contrast to the city's excellence, because its real cause [has nothing to do with the city itself but] is the weakness of man and his inability to live in the way demanded, worthy of the city. Therefore we mean that leaving the place is better than living there in boredom and disrespectfulness, but [it certainly is not better] than living there while living up to the city's demands.¹

Some of these deliberations bear a strong resemblance to views held about a thousand years earlier by the so-called Qumran sect as expressed, for example, in the Temple Scroll. Of course, the Temple Scroll refers mainly—though perhaps not only—to future utopic descriptions of the city rather than to actual practices, but as we deal here with religious theory—not with religious history—we may leave this aside at this point. (Al-Ghazzali too may have exaggerated slightly in order to make his argument more convincing.) What these regulations mean is that the sanctity of the Temple or the Ka'ba spread over to the city and put—in theory at least—unbelievable hardships on its inhabitants or at least on those who aspired to live according to the holy law. In the Temple Scroll these regulations are much stricter and include various sources of defilement and impure relations that are forbidden in the city. In the chapter on “Bans on entering the Temple and Temple city,”² God decrees: “and the city which I will hallow by settling my name and my Temple within it shall be holy and clean” and therefore no impure person shall enter it before special purification as, for example, people who had sexual relations (outside the city) or contacts with the dead or even nocturnal emissions, etc. In the same way “no blind man shall enter the Temple city so that they will not defile the city in which I dwell,” as well as no leper and diseased person, to whom separate places will be allotted in other cities.³ Not only sexual relations are forbidden in the city. So is the action of relieving oneself in the city itself: “And you shall make them a place for a hand outside the city to which they shall go out to the northwest of the city—roofed houses with pits within them to which the excrement will descend.”⁴ This place had to be 3000 cubits outside the city—about 1500 meters according to some—and therefore Y. Yadin supposed that those Essenes who actually made the attempt to live in the city according to such rules tried not to relieve themselves on Shabbat—perhaps they ate accordingly—because they could not go thus far on a Shabbat without transgressing the Shabbat limits. They may also have lived near the Gate—which was later called after them—that led to the “hand” outside and was perhaps closer to it than the other gates.

In the same way Mecca is considered to be the city wherein God built His house and the pilgrims are as visitors coming to see Him, and according to some even shake hands with Him through kissing the Black Stone which is considered to be His right Hand, as it were.⁵ Being part of reality, however, the Hajj regulations with regard to Mecca are more considerate than those of the Temple Scroll about Jerusalem, although they may not seem so. As has been mentioned, after entering the city in the special Ihram garb—which has no counterpart in Judaism—and after performing several rituals at the Ka'ba, the Muslim pilgrim may take off his Ihram dress and is then relieved from the personal prohibitions which go with it. He may now wash or cut his hair or have sexual relations inside the holy city. Only the general prohibitions not to hunt, cut trees, or shed blood in the holy city of Mecca remain in force all the time.

Having mentioned, if only briefly, three basic similarities between the two cities as holy cities and their sanctity, let me stress now three important points of differences between both: the destruction of the Temple, the hopes for its rebuilding, and the redemption of Israel; the competition of al-Madina with Mecca; and the symbolism of Jerusalem as compared to the much more down to earth image of Mecca.

A. The destruction of the first and second Temple of Jerusalem and the dispersion into Exile had—as we all know—far reaching results not only in the political sphere. The political and religious trauma was enormous. Life had stopped as it were and there was a general feeling that all the comforts and pleasures should be discarded until the rebuilding of the Temple and the ingathering of the exiles reinstate again the right equilibrium in history. People even thought that the cosmic order was interrupted because “so long as the temple service is maintained, the world is a blessing to its inhabitants and the rains come down in season.”⁶ But without the Temple offerings there seemed to be no way for atonement of sins and even the gates of prayer seemed to be sealed.⁷ We know, of course how the Sages reorganized the spiritual life of Israel without the Temple, but mourning upon its destruction and the destruction of the city of Jerusalem remained an integral part of Jewish life ever since, and among some it became the central idea of their whole life. Every Jew cited the Psalmist: “If I forget thee, Oh Jerusalem, let my right hand forget, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth if I remember thee not, if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy” (Psalm 137:5–6). For hundreds of centuries Jews all over the world remembered Jerusalem—even more so than the Temple itself—on every occasion in day-to-day life: when a man built his house he left some small part of the wall bare from stucco in memory of Jerusalem; no banquet of joy could be perfect but some things had to be left out in memory of Jerusalem; at every wedding—to this very day—a glass is broken in remembrance of Jerusalem and a special blessing is recited for Jerusalem: “May she who was barren [Zion] be exceedingly glad and exult when her children are gathered within her in joy”; in daily and festival prayers every Jew makes several times each day mention of Jerusalem and the city has a permanent presence in his mind—connected with both his misery and his hopes for redemption: “Let our eyes behold thy return in mercy to Zion” (from the Amidah every day); or in Grace after meals: “And rebuild Jerusalem thy holy city speedily in our days. Blessed are thou, O Lord, who in thy compassion rebuildest Jerusalem,” etc.⁸ Of course, there is not and can not be any parallel to this phenomenon with regard to Mecca.

This historical difference soon became much more than an historical difference only. It brought about deep religious changes in Judaism, which had no counterpart in Islam and some of which were even frowned upon by Islam or ridiculed by its sages. In Judaism the hopes for rebuilding the Temple and Jerusalem and the restoration of the Davidic dynasty became connected with the more general eschatological hopes for a golden messianic age and the

redemption of Israel and of mankind, and with the eternal prophetic search for justice, and righteousness, piety, charity, and peace. Although Jerusalem had been an important part of the eschatological prophetic visions even before its destruction (see, for example, Isaiah 2:2–4), its role became central to these after the destruction. Jewish literature abounds in descriptions that link the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the ingathering of exiles with a dramatic eschatological change of heart in man and the inauguration of a golden new age for man, city, and land and even for the whole world. The city of Jerusalem in ruins became the symbol of the misery of Israel everywhere,⁹ and its future rebuilding the symbol of the redemption of Israel but also of all humankind and the beginning of the Messianic era. In certain Kabbala circles the yearning for Jerusalem even took the form of erotic yearning and the synonymous terms Jerusalem and Zion were explained—under Gnostic influences—as symbols of the majestic male and earthly female (Jerusalem, the city) elements in God himself that will reunite at the end of all times.¹⁰ These are, of course, only a few hints to what is elaborated upon in a huge Jewish literature of all kinds over the centuries and which has no parallel—cannot have any parallel—in Muslim medieval literature with regard to Mecca and the Ka'ba, which never suffered any such blow of history and destruction. Mecca is not mentioned ever in daily prayer in Islam, which in any case is not very descriptive, nor is she mentioned during the festivals—although she is present in the mind of every Muslim who wants to perform the Hajj pilgrimage at least once in his lifetime—but this presence has no daily basis in ritual as in Judaism. Also, Mecca plays no central role in the eschatology of Islam which, in any case, has remained marginal in Sunni Muslim theology probably because no destruction or exile demanded spiritual compensation in the form of a theory of redemption. Even Muslim mystics, the Sufis, were very reserved with regard to their feelings and yearning for Mecca and the Ka'ba and many of them even advised their disciples against making the Pilgrimage as “the knowledge of God is more urgent than the visit to His house.” Or they explained the Quranic verses about the Pilgrimage as referring to “the pilgrimage of the profession of the essence of the one true God” and those about the sacrifice as referring to “the sacrifice of the desires of the heart in the courtyard of the Ka'ba of the heart.”¹¹

B. Let us turn now to the second point of difference between Jerusalem in Judaism and Mecca in Islam. Al-Madina, and Jerusalem to a lesser extent, were and still are great rivals to the primacy of Mecca. In early Judaism there was also rivalry and competition to Jerusalem by other sacred places and holy cities such as Beth-El, which Jacob considered to be “the house of God and the gate of heaven” (Genesis 28:16), or Beth-El and Dan, where Jeroboam ben Nevat established two calves of gold (1 Kings 12:28). Later, in the same way the Samaritans put up Shechem as their holy city instead of Jerusalem. Nevertheless, there can be no doubt that Jerusalem prevailed as *the* holy city of Judaism; it has no competition and shares its holiness with no other city in the world.

Mecca is a different story. From its early beginnings Islam had the two cities of Mecca and al-Madina competing for primacy. Muhammad was born in Mecca, the city of the holy Ka'ba, but he had to leave the city in 622 because of the hostile attitude of its inhabitants to his religious message. He found a place of refuge for himself and his company in Yathrib-al-Madina, and established his leadership over all of Arabia from there. He dreamt of returning to Mecca and re-instating there the monotheistic worship at the Ka'ba. The dream came true eight years later, in 630, when Muhammad returned to Mecca as victor. But he did not stay for long in his city of birth, now the holy city of nascent Islam. He returned to al-Madina, where he died two years later and where he was buried.

The rivalry between the two cities of Mecca and al-Madina was very serious, and a great amount of literature in praise of each one of the two cities exists. This literature is, of course, part of the popular genre in Arabic literature in praise of different cities (or objects or people). But the rivalry between these two cities includes more than local or tribal rivalry only. Mecca is the place of the Ka'ba and of the great holy mosque surrounding it. Every Muslim has to make the pilgrimage to it at least once in his lifetime and to the other sacred places in its vicinity: to the two hills of Safa and Marwa nearby and to the plain of 'Arafat where the dramatic "Standing" and hearing the sermon takes place, as well as to the small places of Muzdalifa and Mina in between. All these places are no competition to the Ka'ba and Mecca and very early became part of them and of the Muslim Hajj pilgrimage. Al-Madina, however, is an independent holy city some 400 kilometers to the north of Mecca. She harbors the Prophet's mosque and his burial place nearby, which is considered to be one of the gates to heaven. No pilgrim to Mecca will go home without visiting the holy tomb of the Prophet Muhammad, although this is not considered part of the pilgrimage. Everyone will want to pray there although it is explicitly forbidden to pray *to* the Prophet as—at least according to theory in classical Islam—there is no holiness but that of God, and no tomb should be worshipped, and even prophets are considered to be only ordinary humans. Al-Madina is even not part of the holy territory of Al-Hidjaz, and the pilgrim may enter into this city in his regular everyday clothes. (It is only forbidden to shed blood, or hunt there, or cut trees.) Even non-Muslims who may never enter Mecca may enter al-Madina, though for a couple of days only. Nevertheless al-Madina aspired for centuries to overtake the primacy of Mecca and become the first holy city of Islam.

It is impossible to go here into details of this fascinating competition, which gave rise to the huge literature in praise of both cities. Mecca is the city wherein every prayer and good deed is multiplied as are also the sins committed there: every prayer there is worth a hundred thousand prayers in any other mosque elsewhere; to live there is as if one lives in constant prayer; if one dies there it is as if one died in lower heaven, and to be resurrected there is almost a promise of God's forgiveness. The Prophet said: "By God, you—Mecca—are the best on God's earth and the most beloved earth to God, and had

I not been evicted from you—I would never have left you” and so on. Other cities—Jerusalem, for example, also tried to compete with Mecca—but to no avail. Only the rivalry of al-Madina was never to be trifled with and often overshadowed the unique place of Mecca in Islamic religious thought and history. It seems that because of this rivalry the amount of literature in praise of al-Madina is enormous, perhaps even more so than that in praise of Mecca! Al-Samhudi (d.1505), a native of al-Madina, is a late author who collected in the two volumes of his *A Complete Account of the History of the Abode—City—of the Chosen Prophet* all the praise of al-Madina. This book comprises sayings and stories in praise of al-Madina, some of which clearly attempt to undermine the special status of Mecca: to visit the Prophet’s tomb and to stay in al-Madina is the best of all good deeds; every prophet is buried in the place he loves most; that Mecca is the best of all cities of God and the one He loves most was said *before* the excellence of al-Madina became clear to everyone, but when the Prophet stayed in al-Madina for many years and proclaimed his religion from there, the benefit of al-Madina became greater than that of Mecca; after the conquest of Mecca the Prophet never returned to settle there. Al-Madina thus became the most beloved city of God where all prayers are answered and in which it is best to die and be buried because the Prophet will intercede for all its people on the day of Judgment; a visit to al-Madina equals a private pilgrimage to Mecca and a prayer in the Prophet’s mosque in al-Madina equals even the Hajj pilgrimage, and so forth.

There can be little doubt that such rivalry and competition did in fact undermine the primacy of Mecca, which could not develop as *the* holy city of Islam. Usually Mecca is considered the first of three holy cities of Islam as in the famous Hadith saying attributed to the Prophet Muhammad: “You shall only set out (literally: fasten your saddles) for three mosques: the Sacred Mosque (in Mecca), my—the Prophet’s—mosque (in al-Madina) and the Al-Aqsa Mosque (in Jerusalem)”¹² or in many variations such as the following: “One prayer in my Mosque (in al-Madina) is worth ten thousand prayers, and one prayer in the Aqsa Mosque is worth a thousand prayers, and one prayer in the Sacred Mosque (of Mecca) is worth one hundred thousand prayers.” Sometimes only two of the three cities are mentioned or a different third one. Sometimes a fourth city is added, but more often than not Mecca is the first of others, of more of the same kind—a phenomenon Jewish Jerusalem never had to wrestle with.

C. Let us now turn to the deepest point of difference between the status of Jerusalem in Judaism and that of Mecca in Islam. In the *Encyclopedia of Religion* at the end of the entry “Jerusalem” F. E. Peters writes:

Jerusalem is more than a city or even a capital. It is a [Biblical] idea. People, city and temple became one . . . linked in destiny and in God’s plan, then transformed and apotheosized into Heavenly Jerusalem . . . [even after its destruction Jerusalem remained] not as a vaguely remembered nostalgia, but as a symbol built solidly into the thought and liturgy of Jerusalem.

We know that this idea and symbol of Jerusalem and especially heavenly Jerusalem became very important also in Christian thought,¹³ and it may well be that the unique position of Jerusalem in Islam was a continuation of this Judeo-Christian heritage. Mecca, on the other hand, never became a symbol of Islam or in Islam. It did not serve as capital, not even as a spiritual capital and although there exists the myth of the heavenly Ka'bas—seven above and seven below in the earth of exactly the same measures as the terrestrial Ka'ba in Mecca—there is no real Islamic counterpart to the Judeo-Christian heavenly Jerusalem.

Why? I believe the answer has less to do with Mecca itself than with the more general characteristics of mainstream Islam as a puritan, almost spartan religion that aspires to understand and express the unity and transcendence of God in the most abstract way possible. Islam knows of no visual symbols just as it shuns icons, liturgy, music, drama, and processions, festivals, myths and even—to some extent—allegory. Of course, there exists no religion without a symbolical language, and in Islam there were mystics and Shi'ites as well as others who cultivated this language especially, but among the three monotheistic religions, mainstream Islam tried to avoid symbols and symbolism more than the other two. Therefore Islam has no visual symbol like the cross, and even no parallel to the Sukka and Lulav or the symbolic parts of the Pesach Seder or to the incense bowl or Shofar of Jewish mosaics, etc. It is, of course, impossible to go here into the details of this statement of mine and to ask whether the Qur'an or the Arabic script, the *Mihrab*—prayer niche—or even the Ka'ba and other items could be considered as symbols of Islam. Suffice it to say here that if we define symbol as something “presented to the senses or the imagination that stands for something else,” Islam may have perhaps “marks or signs of identification” but no visual symbols. With regard to Mecca it is certainly true that Muslim authors denied explicitly and on purpose any symbolic status to the holy city—or to any other place for that matter—just as they denied any religious symbolism to special weekly or yearly times. Friday, for example, is not a day of rest because God never needed any rest after the six days of creation!¹⁴

This deep difference then between the two holy cities has its roots not only in the different historical circumstances that shaped their destiny, but is also an outcome of the different basic characteristics of both religions. While Judaism accepted, to a certain extent at least, the pagan legacy of holy places and holy times as well as symbolic signs—catering thereby to the needs of the people who cannot live with a totally abstract religion—mainstream Islam tried completely to avoid symbolism as well as holy times and places, leaving holiness and symbolism to God alone. This—at least on the theoretical level; in practice this attitude failed completely and popular religion gave copious answers to the demands of the people in terms of festivals, holy places, and holy times. In this theoretical manner we have to understand the highly interesting quotation which Al-Samhudi brings from an early source, but

which he does not accept because he—in contrast—tries to prove that al-Madina is the most holy of all places in the world:

All times and all places are equal and they differ in merit only because of what happens in them, not because of any inherent quality in them. In the same way also the merit of Mecca and al-Madina is connected only with what a person performs in them and with the fact that God Almighty is most generous to his servants and multiplies the rewards of deed done in those cities.

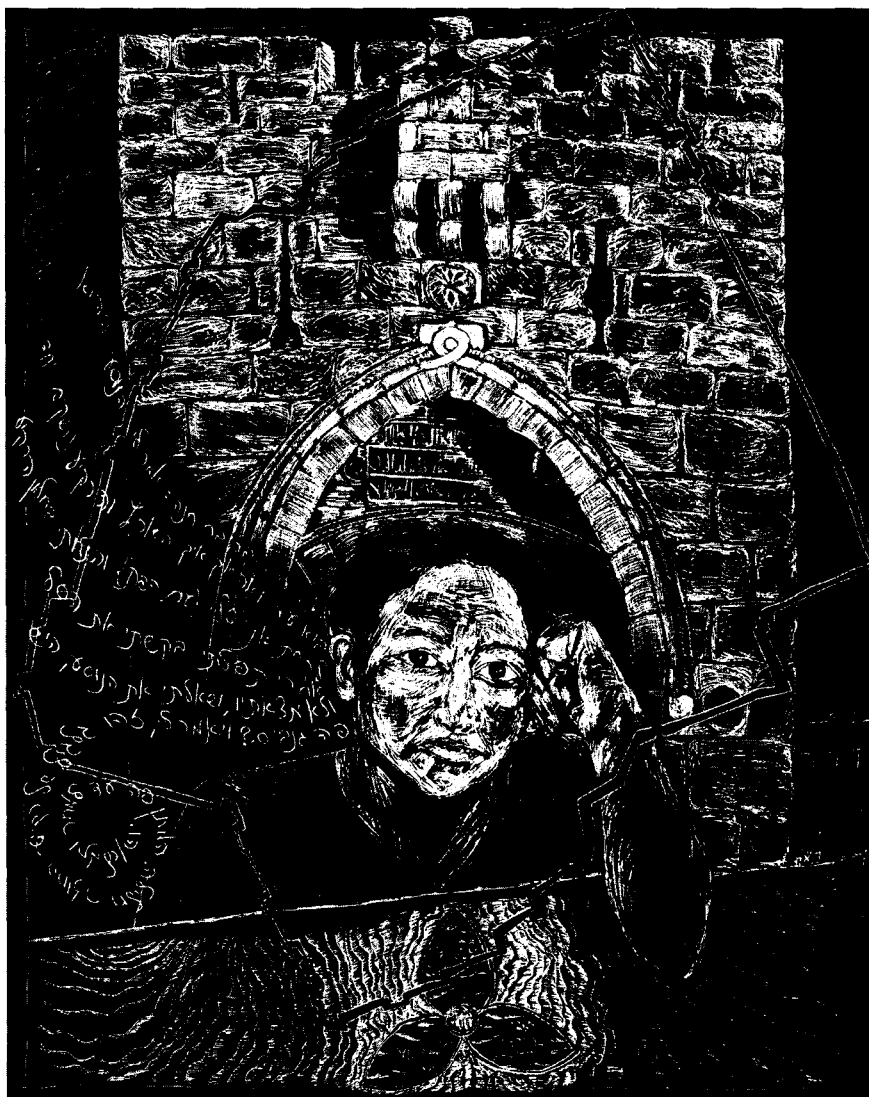
This is the religious ideal of Islam that was seldom achieved in reality. But with regard to Mecca it seems to have succeeded in putting limits to her sanctity and denying her the symbolic status which Jerusalem has attained in Judaism.

NOTES

1. See Abu Hamid Al-Ghazzali, *Ihya' Ulum Al-Din* (Cairo, 1356 Hg.), pt. 1, book 7, pp. 444–445 (in Arabic).
2. Y. Yadin, ed., *The Temple Scroll* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1983), pp. 285–294.
3. Yadin, p. 289.
4. Yadin, p. 294. Cf. Deuteronomy 23:13–15.
5. Al-Ghazzali, p. 490.
6. S. Schechter, *Aboth de Rabbi Nathan* (Vienna, 1887), version A, chap. 4, pp. 19. See also version B, chap. 5, there.
7. See T Berakhot 32 b.
8. There are, of course, many more examples of this kind. The English translation is taken from the *Jewish Prayer Book* (New York, 1965) by Rabbi Joseph H. Hertz.
9. See Y. Yahalom, “The Temple and the City in Hebrew Liturgical Poetry” (Hebrew), in *The History of Jerusalem*, edited by J. Prawer, vol. 1 (Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi, 1987), pp. 215–235.
10. M. Idel, “Jerusalem in Jewish Thought in the Thirteenth Century” (Hebrew), in *The History of Jerusalem*, edited by J. Prawer, vol. 2, (Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi, 1991), pp. 267–269.
11. See *Al-Risala Al-Qushayriyya* (Cairo, 1940), p. 201 (Arabic); Pseudo-Ibn ‘Arabi, *Commentary to the Qur'an* (n.p., n.d.), pp. 66, 68–70 (Arabic). Cf. my “The Religious Dialectics of the Hadjdi,” in H. Lazarus-Yafeh, *Some Religious Aspects of Islam* (Leiden: Brill, 1981), pp. 33–34.
12. M. J. Kister, “You shall only set out for three mosques, a study of an early tradition.” *Le Muséon* 82 (1969): 173–196.
13. See, for example, R. J. Z. Werblowsky, “The Meaning of Jerusalem to Jews, Christians and Muslims,” The Charles Strong Memorial Lecture (Australia 1972), repr. Israel Universities Study Group for Middle Eastern Affairs, 1978; J. Prawer, “Jerusalem in the Christian Perspective of the Early Middle Ages,” in *The History of Jerusalem*, edited by J. Prawer, vol. 1 (Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi, 1987), pp. 249–282 (Hebrew).
14. See Hava Lazarus-Yafeh, *Some Religious Aspects of Islam*, p. 41.

REBECCA ALEXANDER

"The traveler said to Rabbah bar-bar Hannah: Come with me and I will show you where the earth and the sky kiss. [said Rabbah:] I took my basket of bread and placed it in the window of the sky. After my prayers, I went to look for my basket and did not find it. I asked the traveler, Are there thieves here? And he said to me, It is the wheel of the sky that revolves [daily]. Wait here until morning and your basket will be filled." (Source: Rabbah bar-bar Hannah, Palestinian amora, 3rd century Talmudic tales, original Aramaic)



Where Earth and Sky Kiss (8" x 10" scratchboard on white clay)

REBECCA ALEXANDER received a Master of Fine Arts in painting from Pratt Institute, and a Master of Library & Information Science from the University of Washington. She makes art, teaches Hebrew, and is a Judaica librarian in Seattle. Her artwork has appeared in the journal Bridges. She has recently completed an illustrated alef-bet book.

בהרבה משוררים לא הצטיינת בנוסע....
איטליה נראתה לך "באמריקה - אמריקה
מבגרת במעט כבילדותך בשנות העשרים"
אמסטרדם בשבילה היתה "למראית עין
מיובוסטון של המאה התשע-עשרה - בלה תעלות
ובתי-לכנים ברוקיים קטנים ופים עיר-נשמית
ופרוטסטנטית הדוברת-אנגלית....הולנד עצמה (ארץ-שטוחה
עם אקלים אפר) הנבירה לך
לעתים-קרובות-ימדי "את קולומבוס ומאונט ורנו"
עמדת על מדרגות-האבן של תחנת-הרוח
מונטיפיורי בנמל בשלג באור המסנור....
רגלי-נמל מקפלות-תחתיד עקמות בגרבים ונעלי-עור
על-חוף-ריו עם חברתך אלוזבת בישופ
בין עיפונים-מצריים-קנפים תערבת של נסיד-ותלמיד-בית-ספר

From "Lowell"

Like many poets you hardly excelled at travel
Italy seemed to you "like America—a slightly
older America" as in your twenties childhood
your Amsterdam was a kind of 19th century Boston
outwardly all canals and pretty little baroque
brick houses a Protestant worldly and English-
speaking city ... Holland itself (a flat country
with a gray climate) often reminded you
"of Columbus and Mount Vernon"
you stood on the steps at Montefiore's windmill
like a camel in snow blinded by the glare ...
camel legs tucked crookedly under you in shoes and socks
on the beach at Rio with your friend Elizabeth Bishop
among the wing-painted kites a mixture of schoolboy and prince
translated by Peter Cole

HAROLD SCHIMMEL was born in 1935 in Bayonne, New Jersey, and settled in Jerusalem in 1962. His collections of poetry include *Hotel Sion Poems* (1974), *A'ra* (1979), *Lowell* (1985), *Sepher Midrash Tadshei (The Book of Let There Be Grass)* (1993), and *Nochach (Facing)* (1995). Schimmel has also published English translations from the Hebrew poetry of Yehuda Amichai, Avot Yeshurun, and other modern Hebrew poets. PETER COLE, a translator and poet living in Jerusalem, has just published *Selected Poems of Shmuel Ha Nagid*. He has translated of two books of contemporary Hebrew poetry, *Love* and *Selected Poems* by Aharon Shabtai and *From Island to Island* by Harold Schimmel.

The Quest for Jerusalem

HOWARD SCHWARTZ

Wherever I go, I am going toward Jerusalem.
—Rabbi Nachman of Bratslav

DURING ALL OF THEIR MANY EXILES, JEWS HAVE LONGED to travel to the holy city of Jerusalem. This is not only a journey to the heart of the Holy Land, but also a quest for the *Shekhinah*, who is so closely linked to the *Kotel*, the Wailing Wall, all that remains of the Temple in Jerusalem that was once said to have been the *Shekhinah*'s home. This kind of intense longing informs Jewish literature, from the Bible to the folk tales collected orally in Eastern Europe and Israel in this century.

In these writings, Jerusalem focuses Jewish longing as the city in which God's presence and that of the *Shekhinah* is manifest. Thus in tale after tale, the city itself turned into an archetype and became the mirror image of heavenly Jerusalem. To journey to Jerusalem was to engage in a quest, and these stories articulate the spiritual aspects of this questing. This heavenly Jerusalem also represents the archetype of Jerusalem, the embodiment of the dream of Jerusalem as it has grown over the centuries by those longing to return there. From a Jungian perspective, the heavenly Jerusalem represents the holy city within, the home of the psyche and the soul.

A story of the talmudic sage Haninah ben Dosa features miraculous events, and the glowing stones from which the buildings of Jerusalem have been constructed work themselves into the folklore of Jerusalem.

Long ago, in the hills of the Galilee, far from the city of Jerusalem, there lived a rabbi named Haninah ben Dosa. This rabbi was so poor that he and his wife had little to eat except for the carobs and olives that grew wild there. Yet he was still happy, for his love of God was very great.

One year, before Shavuot, Rabbi Haninah saw his neighbors preparing to go up to Jerusalem. Every year they made a pilgrimage there to celebrate the holiday. Everyone took the finest fruits of the harvest, or the finest sheep or goat from his herd, and brought it as a gift for the Temple. Rabbi Haninah also wanted to bring a gift, but he was so poor that he had nothing to offer.

HOWARD SCHWARTZ is Professor of English at the University of Missouri, St. Louis. He has published three books of poetry and several books of fiction, including *Adam's Soul*, and edited a four-volume set of Jewish folktales. A volume of his essays, *Reimagining the Bible: The Storytelling of the Rabbis*, will be published by Oxford University Press in 1997. His most recent essay in Judaism was "The Quest for the Lost Princess: Transition and Change in Jewish Lore" (Summer 1994).

But Rabbi Haninah could not go to Jerusalem empty-handed. He went into his house and looked all around it, but he could not find a worthy gift. So he took a walk, trying to think of what he might do. All at once, he noticed a large, beautiful stone lying by the side of the road. He cried out: "I can take this stone as a gift for Jerusalem. But first I must work on it, so that it will be a worthy gift."

So Rabbi Haninah began to work on that stone. He chiseled and fashioned it. Then he carved in beautiful designs. Finally he polished the stone until it shone brightly in the sun.

Rabbi Haninah stepped back and looked at his finished stone, and he saw that it was indeed a worthy gift. Then he decided it was time to set out for Jerusalem. So he put his arms around that stone and tried to lift it—but the stone did not budge. Rabbi Haninah realized that he would not be able to move it without help.

Just then five farmers came walking down the road. Rabbi Haninah asked if they would help him carry the stone to Jerusalem. But they wanted to be paid for their work, and all Rabbi Haninah had was five pennies. So the men continued on their way.

Rabbi Haninah became very sad, for he realized that he could not afford to pay anyone to help him take that gift to Jerusalem. And when God saw how sad he was, he sent five angels down to earth to help him. The angels disguised themselves as men, and soon Rabbi Haninah saw them coming down the road.

Once again Rabbi Haninah asked for help, and the angels agreed to assist him, as long as he also lent a hand. Of course, Rabbi Haninah agreed to this. And the instant he put his hand on the stone, it flew up in the air, and Rabbi Haninah found himself flying across the heavens toward Jerusalem, along with the angels. And as they approached the city, it first appeared as a jewel glowing in the distance. Rabbi Haninah said to himself: "Now I know why Jerusalem is called the jewel in God's crown."

Soon Rabbi Haninah found himself standing near the entrance of the Temple in Jerusalem, and the stone was there beside him. Rabbi Haninah looked around for the five men, but they were nowhere to be seen. Just then a group of weary pilgrims arrived, and when they saw the stone that Rabbi Haninah had carved, they said: "Look at that beautiful stone! Let us rest here."

Rabbi Haninah was filled with joy, for a miracle had brought his gift to Jerusalem, and now it would serve as a place for weary travelers to sit and rest.

That stone remained there as long as the Temple was still standing. But when the Temple was torn down, the stone disappeared. Some say it was used in rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem. Others say that the same angels who brought it to Jerusalem later brought it into heaven, to the Temple in the heavenly Jerusalem, where Rabbi Haninah now makes his home.¹

Rabbi Haninah's flight with the angels, bearing the stone to Jerusalem, turns our attention to the heavens, and the heavenly Jerusalem, where Rabbi Haninah now makes his home. The concept of a heavenly Jerusalem is a powerful mythic motif that enshrines the holiness of Jerusalem, since the city below is said to be a mirror image of the city above.

According to rabbinic legend, there is not only an earthly Jerusalem, but also a heavenly Jerusalem. King David is said to have visited this heavenly city in his dreams. There he explored the heavenly Temple and came to envision

the holy Temple that his son, Solomon, later built in Jerusalem. And Jewish tradition holds that even though the earthly Temple has been torn down, the heavenly Temple still exists.

We can trace the evolution of a heavenly Jerusalem from two primary biblical passages. The first is Jacob's statement, on waking from the dream in which he saw the heavenly ladder: *This is none other than the House of God, and this is the gate of heaven* (Genesis 28:17).² The identification of the celestial ladder as *the gate of heaven* gave birth to meditation about the nature of the heavenly realm, and that, in turn, to speculation about the existence of a heavenly city, which from the first was linked to Jerusalem, because of its unique, holy status. The two Jerusalems were said to be mirror images of each other.

The second biblical verse to influence the concept of a heavenly Jerusalem is Isaiah's heavenly vision: *I beheld my Lord seated on a high and lofty throne; and the skirts of his robe filled the temple. Seraphs stood in attendance around him* (Isaiah 6:1).³ Here the notion of a heavenly temple is presented directly for the first time, and of course the existence of such a temple gave birth, in turn, to the notion of a heavenly city. An almost identical vision is reported by the prophet Micah: *I saw the Lord seated upon His throne, with all the angels of heaven standing to the right and left of him* (I Kings 22:19).⁴ As time passed, additional details about the heavenly Temple were added to the myth, until it was said that the same sacrifices were performed there, and the same hymns were sung as in the earthly temple. The account of Rabbi Haninah's quest to Jerusalem is found in the Talmud, as is this legend about King David, which demonstrates the intense sanctity of Jerusalem, and especially of the site of the Temple. Since the earthly Temple was built in the earthly Jerusalem, the heavenly Temple must exist in a celestial Jerusalem.

It was King David who first dreamed of building the Temple in Jerusalem. At night, in his dreams, he would climb Jacob's ladder until he reached the heavenly Jerusalem. For there is a Jerusalem in heaven that is the mirror image of the Jerusalem on earth.

King David was fascinated with the heavenly Temple, which was built at the beginning of time. He would study it from every angle. So too did he explore every chamber of that Temple. And when he awoke from these dreams, he would write down the description of the heavenly Temple, for it was his plan to build one exactly like it in the city of Jerusalem.

From these dreams King David also learned that the earthly Temple must be built above an ancient stone, known as the Foundation Stone, which God had set into the earth at the time of creation. But where was this Foundation Stone to be found? King David commanded that shafts be dug to a depth of fifteen hundred cubits. And lo, they struck a stone in one of those shafts. As soon as he learned of it, King David went there with Ahitophel, his counselor, and with other members of the court. They descended into the pit, and there, at the bottom, they saw the immense stone, shining like the darkest emerald.

All those who saw it were amazed, and they knew that it must indeed, be that fabled stone, which served as the world's foundation. Yet all at once King David was possessed by a great curiosity to see what lay beneath it. King David ordered

it to be raised, but a voice came forth from the stone, saying: "Be warned that I must not be lifted. I serve to hold back the waters of the Abyss."

All of them stood in awe of that voice, but King David's curiosity was still not sated. He decided to ignore the warning, and once more he ordered the stone to be raised. None of his advisors dared say anything, for they feared his wrath. After a great effort, a corner of the Foundation Stone was lifted up, and King David bent down and peered into the Abyss beneath it. There he heard something like the sound of rushing waters, and he suddenly realized that by lifting the stone he had set free the waters of the Deep. Once again the world was in danger of being deluged, as in the time of Noah.

King David trembled with fear, and he asked the others what they might do to cause the waters to fall back, but no one spoke. Then King David said: "Perhaps if I wrote the Name of God on a potsherd, and cast it into the depths, we might still be saved. But does anyone know if this is permitted?" Still the others said nothing, and King David grew angry and said: "If any one of you knows this and still refuses to answer, then your soul will bear the curse of the end of existence!" Then Ahitophel spoke: "Surely the Name can be used to bring peace to the whole world." So David picked up a potsherd and scratched the four-letter Name of God into it, and cast it into the bottomless pit. All at once the roar of the waters grew fainter, and they knew that they had been saved by the power of the Name.

In the days to come King David repented many times for his sin, and he gave thanks to God for sparing the world from another flood. And his son, Solomon, had the Holy of Holies of the Temple built exactly above the Foundation Stone, for both the stone and the Temple bore the seal of God's blessing.⁵

In this story from the Talmud, King David sets out to dig the foundations of the Temple, and strikes the Foundation Stone of the earth, upon which God built the rest of this world. This confirms that Jerusalem is the very center of the world, as it was portrayed in ancient maps.

At the same time, this tale is a Divine test, not unlike the tests of Adam and Eve, of Abraham in the Akedah, the binding of Isaac, and of Job. Even though a voice from the stone warns him not to lift it, King David, not unlike Pandora, lifts the Foundation Stone and sets free the powers of chaos, the waters of the Abyss, which threaten to inundate the earth as in the time of Noah. In a desperate moment David writes the Tetragrammaton, the secret Name of God, on a shard and throws it into the abyss—and the power of God's Name causes the waters to retreat.

It was not King David's fate to live to see the building of the Temple, although the dream to build it was his. It was Solomon's accomplishment to complete the Temple. There are numerous tales about the building of the Temple, such as one in the Talmud about how King Solomon captured Ashmodai, the king of demons, and kept him imprisoned until the building of the Temple was complete.⁶ So too is there an early tale in *The Testament of Solomon* about a vampire demon that victimized the son of the chief builder of the Temple in order to distract his father and prevent him from completing the building of the Temple.⁷

There is also a lovely folk tale about the building of the Walls of the Temple that was collected by Zev Vilnay, the great expert on the folk traditions of Jerusalem, from a young man he met near the wall. This tale explains how the Western Wall escaped destruction when the rest of the Temple was torn down.

When the time came for King Solomon to build the Temple, he called everyone together—the rich and the poor, the princes and the priests—and he said: “People of Israel, let us build a splendid Temple in Jerusalem in honor of God. And since the Temple will be the holy place of all the people, all of the people should share in building it. Therefore you will cast lots to decide which wall you will build.”

So King Solomon prepared four lots. On one he wrote North, on another South, on the third East, and on the last West. Then he had each group choose one of them. In this way, it was decided that the princes would build the northern wall as well as the pillars and the stairs of the Temple. And the priests would build the southern wall and tend the Ark and weave its curtain. As for the wealthy merchants, they were to build the eastern wall as well as supplying the oil that would burn for the Eternal Light. The job of building the western wall, as well as weaving the Temple’s curtains, fell to the poor people, who also were to pray for the Temple’s completion. Then the building began.

The merchants took the golden jewelry of their wives and sold it to pay workers to build the wall for them, and soon it was finished. Likewise the princes and the priests found ways to have their walls built for them. But the poor people had to build the wall themselves, so it took them much longer.

Every day the poor came to the site of the Temple, and they worked with their own hands to build the western wall. And all the time they worked on it, their hearts were filled with joy, for their love of God was very great.

At last the Temple was finished, as beautiful as the Temple on high. Nothing in the world could compare with it, for it was the jewel in the crown of Jerusalem. And after that, whenever the poor people went to the Temple, fathers would say to their sons, “Do you see that stone in the wall? I put it there with my own hands.” And mothers would say to their daughters, “Do you see that beautiful curtain in the Temple? I wove that curtain myself.”

Many years later, when the Temple was destroyed, only the Western Wall was saved, for the angels spread their wings over it. For that wall, built by the poor, was the most precious of all in the eyes of God.

Even today the Western Wall is still standing. Now it is sometimes known as the Wailing Wall, for every morning drops of dew can be seen on its stones, and it is said among the people that the wall was crying at night for the Temple that was torn down.

And, as everyone who has been there can testify, God’s presence can still be felt in that place.⁸

There are many accounts of miracles and visions associated with the Temple, for both in its presence and its absence, the Temple in Jerusalem has always been central to the holiness of the city. One of the most famous visions, as recounted in the Talmud, was that of the high priest who was said to have seen God on Yom Kippur, inside the Holy of Holies:

Once, when Rabbi Ishmael ben Elisha, the High Priest, went into the Holy of Holies of the Temple, he looked up and saw Akatriel Yah, the Lord of Hosts, seated on a high and exalted throne. And the Lord spoke to him and said: "Ishmael, My son, bless me." And Rabbi Ishmael raised his hands in a blessing, and said: "May it be Your will that Your mercy overcomes Your justice, and may Your children be blessed with Your compassion." And when Rabbi Ishmael raised his eyes, the Lord inclined His head toward him.⁹

The Temple was twice destroyed, in 586 B.C.E. by the Babylonians, led by Nebuchadnezzar, who carried the Israelites into captivity, and in 70 C.E. by the Romans. In Jewish folklore these two catastrophes blur into one, especially since both were said to have taken place on the 9th of Av. All that remains is the Kotel, the Western Wall, the last retaining wall of the Temple. There are many heart-wrenching midrashim about the destruction of the Temple, especially in Lamentations Rabbah. One of the most moving is found in the Talmud, concerning the High Priest:

The Temple in Jerusalem had been set on flame, and the moment of destruction had arrived. The High Priest went up to the roof, the keys of the Temple in his hand. There he called out: "Master of the Universe! The time has come to return these keys to You." Then he threw the keys high into the air, and at that instant a hand reached down from above and caught them, and brought them back into heaven.¹⁰

The destruction of the second Temple was the beginning of a very long exile from Jerusalem, which did not end until Jerusalem was liberated by Israeli soldiers in the 1967 Six Day War.

The longing to return to Jerusalem found expression in a multitude of tales about quests to the holy city. One story about the Ari recounts a mystical journey to Jerusalem that never took place:

It is told that one day Rabbi Isaac Luria of Safed, known as the Ari, was meditating in a field with his disciples. Suddenly he turned to them and declared that they must set out for Jerusalem at once. The disciples were taken aback, but half of them had such perfect faith in the Ari that they stood up, ready to depart. But the others grew afraid. After all, they had not told their families, nor had they made any preparations for the journey. They begged the Ari to give them enough time to do these things before they departed. And the Ari looked at them, broken-hearted, and said: "I heard a *bat kol*, a heavenly voice, proclaim that if we undertake a journey to Jerusalem at once, without the slightest hesitation, the footsteps of the Messiah will soon be heard. But just as you raised your objections, I heard the voice say that the chance to bring the Messiah had been lost."¹¹

Even though the Ari lived in the holy city of Safed, it is clear from this tale that in his eyes Jerusalem was an even holier city, and that undertaking a quest to Jerusalem, at that moment, without hesitation, would have initiated the messianic era. Note that this tale implicitly links Jerusalem with the coming of the Messiah; and many tales about Jerusalem have such messianic overtones.

The primary link of Messiah to Jerusalem concerns the rebuilding of the Temple, which according to tradition will take place in the messianic era.

There was an incident a few years ago that served as a reminder of the messianic link to Jerusalem. It was reported widely that three of the most prominent rabbis in Mea Sha'arim in Jerusalem had dreamed, on the same night, that the Messiah was about to come. This incident sent a messianic shudder through the Hasidim and many other observant Jews, who had already identified the Russian war in Afghanistan as the War of Gog and Magog that would precede the coming of the Messiah. This messianic fervor was only calmed when two of the three rabbis announced that they had not had any messianic dreams after all.

The tradition that King David's plans for the Temple were drawn from the heavenly Jerusalem is based on I Chronicles 28:11-12: "Then David gave Solomon, his son, the pattern of the porch [of the Temple], and of the houses thereof, and of the upper rooms there, and of the place of the Ark-cover. . . . And the pattern of all he had by the spirit."¹²

By using midrashic logic in interpreting this passage, the passage *And the pattern of all he had by the spirit* seemed to imply a heavenly Jerusalem. In this way the concept of the heavenly Jerusalem came into being. It is the subject of many fine tales, including this hasidic tale told about the Kotzker Rebbe. Here we have another kind of quest to Jerusalem—to the celestial Jerusalem in a heavenly journey. The story is "The Ocean of Tears," a story about the Kotzker Rebbe transmitted by Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach:

For Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Kotzk, known as the Kotzker Rebbe, truth was the most important thing. So dedicated to truth was he that he spent the last twenty years of his life in his study, which he seldom left, and where he only rarely received visitors. One of these guests was his closest friend, Reb Yitzhak of Vorki. So close were they that Reb Yitzhak named his younger son (later his successor as Rebbe in Vorki) Menachem Mendel, after his friend. Father and son were very close and were always seen together. And if Reb Yitzhak had to leave his son to go on a journey, they would write to each other every day. Then it happened that Reb Yitzhak died, and his son Mendele could not be consoled, but he still expected to hear from his father in some way. However, no message came, not even a dream. So a month after his father's death Mendele went to visit the Kotzker Rebbe to ask why he had not heard anything from his father.

The Rabbi of Kotzk said: "Mendele, I share your grief over the death of your father, for he was my closest friend. And I, too, expected him to contact me from the world to come, and I was surprised that he did not. And since he was not coming to me, I decided to go to him.

"Therefore I pronounced a holy name and my soul flew up to heaven. I ascended all the way to the Jerusalem on high. For just as there is a city of Jerusalem in the Holy Land, so too is there one in heaven. Now I knew that all of his days your father longed to be in Jerusalem, and I was certain that I would find him there.

"Before long I found myself standing before the celestial Temple, suspended in the heavens above. For although the Temple on earth was torn down long

ago, the celestial Temple still exists. There I saw angels entering and departing in great numbers, and I went to them and asked if they had seen Reb Yitzhak. And they said yes, he had been there, but he had left.

"So I left there and flew through all the palaces of heaven. For all of the great prophets and sages have their own palaces in the world to come, where they continue to teach the Torah. I went to the palace of Rashi, the great commentator. And there I was told that yes, Reb Yitzhak had been there, but he had left.

"Then I rose up through the palaces of Maimonides, of Rabbi Akiba, and even those of Moses and Abraham. And everywhere I went I asked if they had seen Reb Yitzhak, and they always told me that yes, he had been there, but he had left.

"Finally I called upon the angel Gabriel, and from him I learned that if I wanted to find your father, I would have to search for him in a dark forest at the ends of the earth. So I girded my strength and entered that endless forest. And all the while I wondered what your father was seeking in that dark place.

"For what felt like a lifetime, I made my way through that forest. Then, when I reached the end of it, I saw the strangest sight—a mighty ocean, with waves that rose up very high, and as they rose they made a sobbing sound. And there, by the shore, I saw Reb Yitzhak, leaning on a staff. And I said: 'Yitzhak, it is me, Mendel. I have found you at last!'

"And your father said: 'Mendel, come here! I have something to show you.' And when I stood beside him, he pointed to the ocean and said: 'Do you know what ocean this is?' I turned to that strange ocean, and saw how high the waves rose up, and heard its moaning and sighing. And I said: 'No, never have I seen such an ocean. What ocean is it?'

"And Reb Yitzhak said: 'This is the Ocean of Tears—of all the tears shed by the Jews. And the waves of this ocean cry out to God, and that is why there is the sound of sobbing. I could have spent eternity in the heavenly Jerusalem, but I have vowed never to leave this place until God dries all the tears. I have been praying day and night. Will you pray with me?'

"Of course, I said yes. So your father and I prayed together. Never have I prayed so hard. Tears fell from our eyes into the ocean of tears. And then a miracle took place, for each time one of our tears fell into the ocean, the waters went down a little further, until, at last, the ocean was dry.

"Then, all at once, a great rainbow filled the heavens, the most beautiful rainbow I had ever seen. The sight of that rainbow filled me with hope, for I was certain it was the same rainbow that Noah had seen.

"Then I knew it was time to take my leave of your father, and return to this world. We embraced, and he asked me to assure you that you would be hearing from him very soon."

Now when young Mendele heard these words, he wept tears of joy. And that night he dreamed that he and his father were standing together inside the celestial Temple in the heavenly Jerusalem, surrounded by joyful sages and angels. And a wonderful light shone from his father's face.¹³

Another account of a holy quest to Jerusalem was collected by the Israel Folktale Archives, founded 40 years ago by Professor Dov Noy of the Hebrew University, which today has collected 20,000 oral tales from every Jewish ethnic community in Israel. This tale, from Poland, like so many tales concerning the Messiah, explains why the Messiah has not yet come:

Eighty years ago, in a Polish yeshivah, there were two students who were filled with a longing for redemption. Both of them were eager to travel to the Holy Land, and they especially wanted to see King David's tomb. They dreamed about it day and night, and at last they decided to set out on the journey, even though they didn't have any money. On the way they met with many obstacles, but at last they arrived at the Holy City of Jerusalem. They were thrilled to have arrived there safe and sound, but they did not know how to find King David's tomb. While they were wondering where it was, Elijah the Prophet appeared before them in the form of an old man and showed them the way. And when they reached the foot of Mount Zion, Elijah said:

"Now my sons, ascend Mount Zion until you reach the entrance of King David's tomb, and enter there and go down the steps, until you reach the bottom of the tomb. There you will be blinded by visions of gold, silver and diamonds. These are only illusions, set to tempt you from your purpose. Ignore them and search for the jug of water at the head of King David. That jug contains water from the Garden of Eden. Pour the water from that jug over the hands of King David as he stretches his hands toward you. Pour the water three times over each hand, and then King David will rise up and the footsteps of the Messiah will be heard in the world. For King David is not dead, he lives and exists. He is only asleep and dreaming, and he will arise when we are worthy of it. By your virtue and merit, he will arise and redeem us. Amen, and may this come to pass."

When Elijah finished these words, he disappeared. The young men then ascended Mount Zion, and went down into the depths of King David's tomb. Everything was just as Elijah had said it would be. They saw King David stretched out on a couch, with a jug of water at his head. And when they reached King David, he stretched out his hands to them. But just then the young men were blinded by all the riches they saw in that tomb, and they forgot to pour water onto the king's outstretched hands. In anguish his hands fell back and immediately the king's image disappeared.

The young men were startled when they realized that they had let the opportunity for redemption slip through their fingers, and now it was too late.¹⁴

This is one of many tales about King David being alive. All of them grow out of the famous song, "*David Melekh Ysrael, hai hai vickayom*"—David, King of Israel, lives and exists. And in a sense it is true—King David's presence in Jerusalem is so vivid that it seems impossible to believe that he is not alive. For in the Jewish longing for the days of the redemption, when the footsteps of the Messiah will be heard, it is equally impossible not to believe that someone righteous enough will merely have to pour water from the Garden of Eden over King David's hands and he will wake up. Everyone in this world and the world to come is expecting this to happen. Elijah is still holding his breath. And still we are waiting.

NOTES

1. Ecc. Rab 1:1.

2. The Holy Scriptures according to the Masoretic text: a new translation with the aid of previous versions and with constant consultation of Jewish authorities. New ed. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1955.

3. Tanakh = The Holy Scriptures: the new JPS translation according to the traditional Hebrew text. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1985.
4. The Holy Scriptures according to the Masoretic text: a new translation with the aid of previous versions and with constant consultation of Jewish authorities. New ed. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1955.
5. B. Sukkah 53a-b and Y. Sanh. 29b. Additional legends about the *Even Shetiyah* (Foundation Stone) are found in the Mishnah, Yoma 5:2, in B. Yoma 54a-b and in Zohar II:222a-222b.
6. B. Gittin 68b.
7. *The Testament of Solomon* (Greek), edition of F. F. Fleck, in *Wissenschaftliche Reise durch das südliche Deutschland, Italien, Sicilien und Frankreich*, vol. 2 (Leipzig: 1837), pp. 113-140.
8. From Zev Vilnay, *Aggadot Eretz Yisrael*, 4th edition (no. 193) (Jerusalem: 1953). Collected by Zev Vilnay from a Jewish youth in Jerusalem in 1922.
9. B. Ber. 7a.
10. The earliest source seems to be Apocalypse of Baruch 7-8 and 80. The legend is also found in J. Shekalim 50a and B. Ta'anit 29a and in *Pesikta Rabbati* 26:6.
11. *Shivhei ha-Ari* 9b-10a, edited by Shlomo Meinstler (Jerusalem: 1905). An oral variant is IFA 16159, collected by Shimon Shababo from Orna Fadida of Israel.
12. The Holy Scriptures according to the Masoretic text: a new translation with the aid of previous versions and with constant consultation of Jewish authorities. New ed. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1955, slightly adapted by the author.
13. Collected by Howard Schwartz from Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach. For a variant of this tale see S. Y. Zevin, *A Treasury of Chassidic Tales on the Festivals*, vol. 2, (Brooklyn: Mesorah Publications, 1982), pp. 461-462.
14. IFA 966, collected by Nehama Zion from Miriam Tschernobilski of Poland. See *Folktales of Israel*, edited by Dov Noy (Chicago: University of Chicago: Press, 1963), pp. 7-9.

Document

Page of dead letters. Dead words
in a dead language for a dead man's wife.
To be granted a *get*, a divorce,
she must prove her husband dead –
witnesses, tokens, last words. To give
a death to the missing man, Jewish Pole
conscripted into the Russian Army,
the Eastern front a growing place for wires.

Thirty months after his letters stop coming,
a one-legged man from thirty miles away
arrives saying he will sign the document for her,
if someone who can write
will take his story down. It is sealed, made legal,
by the rabbi in Lublin. She will carry
it with her to the States with her son,
Abe. She will remarry.

*I met Jacob Sol when we first entered
the Army. He was a printer from Lublin.
He had red hair and brown eyes. He was
not very tall. On the 29th of December, 1914,
I believe near the town of D-
our regiment was shelled by a German force.
We all ducked behind a wooden barrier.
When the shelling was over, Jacob did not get up.*

We weren't sure the name wasn't shortened
at Ellis Island until our grandmother found this:
Yiddish scribble my sister holds.
Her Linguistics professor translated it for us:
"printer"? "scribe"? The handwriting is faint
and the idioms obscure, buried in Polish markings,
stamps and creases like his corpse somewhere underground.
But the name, *Sol*, is clear and sharp as blood on glass.

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Simcha

The men pogo into each other like wind-up toys,
 complete with iron smiles.
 It's a rough circle: they move in for a turn, snarl,
 then shift outside
 to watch and catch their breath. The groom
 just got his second wind. Both knees in the air,
 he's watching his feet stomp, absorbed in his own movement,
 a whirling Buddha.
 One man jumps in with his fedora aflame,
 an old trick.
 Another balances a wine bottle on his head,
 runs circles,
 his eyes fixed on a space behind his eyes,
 pays slick and gleaming.
 The band keeps pace, keyboard switching to clarinet,
 then vocals:
 "Moshiach! Moshiach! Moshiach!" The joint is jumping.
 Even the seventy-year-old rebbe
 does yoyo tricks and reeks Scotch.
 Even the clean-shaven relatives from the East
 do the best they can. Work it.
 Male sweat thick in the air.
 They lift the groom again to see his bride on the other side –
 this time without a chair.
 He stands on the Balancer's shoulders, calves knotted,
 held tight. His grin
 is furious, his kipah askew, tuxedo shirt
 showing damp at the stomach.
 With the height he hovers above the amplifiers.
 Across the divider, the women dance
 a calmer hora, clap their hands with spread fingers.
 She sits in the center, grinning at them.
 It's so quiet where he is now, he can almost hear her dress shift,
 the fabric stiff
 under his fingers when he lifted her veil.
 She looks up and sees him, her lipstick
 smudged, her eyes wild
 and striking. She closes her lips for a moment,
 and he lets himself fall
 back into the music, the riot, the sea of hands.

Remembering Anne Frank

JACOB B. MICHAELSEN

IN 1995, FIFTY YEARS AFTER ANNE FRANK'S DEATH, THE publication of two books and the release of a documentary film shed new light both on her life and on how the world has come to know her. In *An Obsession with Anne Frank*, Lawrence Graver, tells the story of Meyer Levin, an important, but neglected American writer, who was instrumental in bringing the original version of Anne's Diary to the United States.¹ Not long after its publication here, Levin had a quarrel with Anne's father, Otto Frank, over who would write the play based on the *Diary*. This conflict became an obsession for Levin that lasted the rest of his life. *The Diary of a Young Girl: The Definitive Edition* includes all the material Anne wrote, a significant portion of which Otto Frank removed in his initial editing.² Otto Frank sought in the initial version to universalize the story as one of the consequences of intolerance in general, rather than of a virulent anti-Semitism in particular, and to portray Anne as tamer than the assertive and talented teenager that she was. It was this taming of Anne and of her story that led to the conflict between Levin and Otto Frank. And the Oscar-winning documentary, *Anne Frank Remembered*, provides a gripping portrait of Anne's life and of her death which, in its particularity, moves us away from Otto Frank's universalizing perspective and closer to Meyer Levin's understanding of what the *Diary* had to tell us.³

The ground for Meyer Levin's obsession with Anne Frank was prepared during his service as a war correspondent in the European Theater during WW II. In that capacity, he accompanied American forces as they liberated the camps, including Bergen-Belsen, where Anne Frank died. Lawrence Graver tells us that "the camps touched the deepest sources of horror, anguish, and fear in his personality, and changed him for good. As he was later to say, 'Human beings had had it in them to do this, and we were of the same species.'"⁴ Levin committed himself to bear witness to this horror and, by implication, to discover how human beings could have conceived and carried out the Holocaust. Even as he sent dispatches back to America, he came to believe that writing this story was beyond his powers. "This tragic epic," he wrote, "cannot be written by a stranger to the experience. . . . Someday a teller would arise from amongst [the survivors]."⁵

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The story for which Levin waited did not come from a survivor. While living in France after the war, his wife, Teresa Torres, also a writer, came across the French version of *The Diary of a Young Girl* and brought it home. With the *Diary*, he had found a “teller.” Levin threw himself into the project of bringing it to England and America and played a key role in getting it published in America in 1952. Levin saw early on that the *Diary* could be adapted for the theater and sought authorization to take on this project. Both Otto Frank, who edited the *Diary*, and Cheryl Crawford, its editor at Doubleday, agreed to give Levin a chance even though he had had no experience as a playwright. Levin agreed to work closely with a playwright if the draft he submitted was found to have sufficient promise. Graver tells us that Levin saw this as an opportunity to tell the story as he knew it and, as well, to establish his reputation as a major Jewish writer.

Levin had published a great deal prior to the discovery of the *Diary*. He worked for newspapers, wrote for magazines, wrote and produced films and published a number of novels, including *The Old Bunch*, about the lives of “two dozen young Jews,” the children of immigrants to Chicago’s west side, and *Citizens*, about the strike and subsequent police shooting at the Republic Steel plant outside Chicago.⁶ He had, by the war, developed a modest audience “for stories from a discerning American point of view about the way Jews lived then and in the recent past.”⁷ Even so, his editors urged him to include non-Jews in his stories and become less ethnically focused. Returning from a trip to Tel Aviv after the war, Levin became convinced that he must “remain an American writer writing about Jews.”⁸

In 1948–49, he undertook *In Search*, which “is nothing less than Levin’s attempt to come to terms with his identity and the condition of being a Jew in the mid-twentieth century.”⁹ Editors found his preoccupation with “Jewish victimization and self-hatred, notably his own difficulties in getting fiction published and films distributed,” a fatal shortcoming leading him to publish the book himself in Paris.¹⁰ Shortly thereafter, it was accepted by a little-known New York house. This turn of events convinced Levin that he faced “an antagonism to who he was, to his world view and his way of expressing it.”¹¹ This conviction stayed with him for the rest of his writing career and helped set the stage for his obsession. One can imagine that, had his play been accepted, he might have joined the movement of “[w]riting by and about Jews . . . to the center of the postwar cultural scene.”¹² In 1956 he published *Compulsion*, a story about the Leopold-Loeb murder of Bobby Franks, which he had covered as a reporter in the thirties.¹³ This book did reach a broad audience.

Both Otto Frank and Cheryl Crawford, the *Diary*’s editor at Doubleday, found Levin’s draft of the play unacceptable. Rather than working further with him, they chose Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett, co-authors of a number of successful plays, and it was their play that became a hit on Broadway and on which the 1959 movie was based. This decision, which gave this task to non-Jews who had not witnessed the horror directly, was the beginning of Levin’s

lifelong obsession with Anne Frank. Graver covers Levin's tortured path with great care and sympathetic understanding. We learn that Levin eventually brought suit against Otto Frank, made agreements with Frank and with the publisher that he failed to keep, advertised his complaints in newspapers and published a book about his obsession. Even though the market for work by Jewish writers writing on Jewish themes picked up after World War II, he was unable to take advantage of it. Indeed, he saw the modest market for his early work to be the result of discrimination and the troubles he had with his version of the play as a continuation of it. Eventually one becomes frustrated with his pugnacity and paranoia and his inability to grasp that the world was not yet ready for the story he wanted to tell.

In his concluding chapter, "Don Quixote and the Star of David," Graver assesses the effects of Levin's obsession on himself and on his career. He portrays the obsession as a self-inflicted wound, as a "punishment he administered to himself out of guilt and shame of being Jewish, and from disillusionment at being 'betrayed' by Otto Frank." His writing, his family especially, his friends and his adversaries all suffered from his inability to see the obstacles confronting any effort, not only his, to finding "an authentic way to bear witness to the Holocaust in a society governed by money, popular taste, media hype, democratic optimism, and a susceptibility to easy consolation." With the benefit of hindsight, we now see clearly "that he was in vital ways a more reliable reader of the girl's book than those who helped create the sentimental mystique in America."¹⁴

To understand Levin's obsession, we need to get a firm grasp on what was at issue. Most importantly, Graver believes that Levin's play, which was produced only in Israel during Levin's lifetime and in Boston after Levin's death, is more authentic and much closer to the truth than the Goodrich-Hackett play, which reached multitudes the world over. "Working in a shoe-box-sized playing place, the Lyric Stage Company (of Boston) was able to communicate with great effectiveness the fright and claustrophobia of their inhabitants entombed in the hiding place, and much of the meaning of what happened to them there and afterward. That the two families and Dussel are Jewish is fundamental to the meaning. The Germans persecuted them for one reason, and this single fact shapes their response to their predicament."¹⁵

We can get to the heart of Levin's distress by examining a scene from the 1959 movie. Anne writes in the penultimate entry in her diary that "[i]t's a wonder I haven't abandoned all my ideals, they seem so absurd and impractical. Yet I cling to them because I still believe, in spite of everything, that people are truly good at heart."¹⁶ Near the end of the movie Anne dramatically proclaims this belief, not once but, twice. Few viewers will fail to get the message. Graver writes that "[m]ost theater-goers adored the Goodrich-Hackett Diary because they felt it transformed horror into something consolatory, inspirational, and even purgatorial: the characters may have been doomed, but the play was full of hope, energy, humor, lyricism, and 'ineradi-

cable life.’”¹⁷ This famous exclamation about the character of the human heart occurs very near the end of Anne’s text (July 15, 1944). In the remaining pages Graver notes, “Anne Frank followed . . . [it] with an apocalyptic vision of ‘the ever approaching thunder,’ destruction, and ‘the suffering millions.’” For Levin, not only did this play not speak to how human beings could perpetrate the Holocaust; it did not even ask the question.

The response to the play in Germany where it was performed nearly 2,000 times and seen by more than a million people illustrates its problematic character. “Its sentimentality and evasiveness—its minimizing the Jewish subject in an effort to achieve an all-embracing, consoling universality—contributed to the tendency of many German playgoers to identify with the victims rather than see themselves as perpetrators.” The Goodrich-Hackett play ends with knocking on the door. There are no SS troops, no camps, no open mass graves, no ovens. Graver believes that, ironically, the play may have accelerated the “long-delayed response to the Nazi past, especially among the young.”¹⁸

It should not surprise us that, just after the war, the publisher did not want a play that confronted its audience with the “monstrous implications of the German attempt at genocide.”¹⁹ Avoiding these implications was commonplace for years. The Eichmann trial in 1961 brought the matter forward in a dramatic way. And Israel, after the Six Day War in 1967, which many feared at the outset would become a second Holocaust, could now be seen as “acting as a very strong focus of worldwide Jewish emotional loyalty and thereby as a preservative of Jewish Identity.”²⁰ The success of the Israeli Defense Forces provided a much more secure basis than existed earlier for taking up these “monstrous implications.” But in truth, it has taken decades for the horror to come out.

Levin misjudged what he was up against. In the beginning the issue was not personal; those who had a say in the matter believed that the public did not want what Levin had to offer. Nor did Otto Frank want it. Indeed, Otto Frank sought to make the Diary serve as a document of universal appeal against intolerance rather than one emphasizing the genocide of the Jews. In his editing “he omitted passages that fell generally into four categories: those that might offend living people, those that reflected negatively on his dead wife, those that were extremely intimate, and those he thought trivial and of little import.”²¹ To illustrate the first category, the German edition prepared from the original Dutch-language diary, Anne notes the rule that everyone in the annex had to “speak softly at all times, in any civilized language, therefore not in German,” becomes “all civilized languages but softly.”²² Otto Frank made this change because of a desire not to offend some German friends.

The *Definitive Edition* contains thirty per cent more material than the original version, much of it showing Anne as an assertive and talented teen-age girl rather than a flawless symbol. She criticized her mother extensively and often harshly. Her sister Margot, who was older, appears much more accept-

ing. Still, Anne's criticisms seem within the bounds of normal complaint in mother-daughter relations for a person of Anne's temperament. Writing about them in her diary may well have helped her behave more decently toward her mother than she otherwise would have done. It is hard to believe that readers would see them as negative reflections on her mother. Anne writes of her discovery of her genitals and of her awareness of her growing sexuality. This, too, gives the reader a chance to see Anne as a real person, giving vitality and power to her story. The omissions tell us as much about Otto Frank as about his daughter.²³

Graver provides an analysis of how Otto Frank came to have a view of the *Diary* and of the Holocaust so at variance with Levin's. After quoting from the entry for April 11, 1944, he describes it as "an impassioned compendium of topics that have absorbed the Jewish people for more than two millennia: the origin and meaning of persecution and the possibility that suffering may be morally redemptive; the nature of the Jews' special relationship to a severe but faithful God; the role of the Jew was 'different' among the world's peoples: the perplexing, often paradoxical, relationship between rights, duties, and obligations; and the dogged assertion of the value of Jewish life in the face of affliction and uncertainty."²⁴

As a person of modest and reserved temperament and one not given to verbalizing his "innermost thoughts and concerns," Otto Frank's need to rebuild his "shattered life" would lead him "to repress the horrors he had lived through."²⁵ Feeling compelled to sound a healing note, "he felt confirmed in his constructivist instinct by daily letters from readers all over the world (the vast majority of them not Jewish) who testified that his daughter's rare book was an inspiring celebration of life in the face of hostile forces." But these readers had not, as Levin had, witnessed the liberation of the camps and seen the devastation, and they had not asked how human beings could have designed and built camps for the systematic destruction of an entire people.

The recent film, *Anne Frank Remembered*, which won an Oscar as a documentary in 1995, includes the story of Anne's last days in Bergen-Belsen.²⁶ Hanneli Goslar, a school friend whose family had been taken, and about whom Anne had expressed concern in her diary, did survive. She told how, at Bergen-Belsen, she had thrown a package of clothing and food over a fence to her but never saw her again. Another survivor from Amsterdam, Janny Brandes, encountered Anne only days before her death, "stumbling, naked, in the freezing cold of that final winter at Bergen-Belsen. She had stripped off all lice-ridden clothes from her body and was barely wrapped in a gray blanket, sobbing, crying for help. She was all bone and tears and wide-eyed starvation, begging for clothes before she returned to the typhus-ridden body of her sister Margot, who lay near death."²⁷

Jon Blair, who directed the 1995 documentary, believed, along with Otto Frank, that the diary had a universalist message. Blair disagreed with those "who feel that the Holocaust was a uniquely Jewish experience and that

Anne's story should be about the genocide of the Jews specifically."²⁸ The film, however, belies Blair's stated intention: it does focus on the genocide of the Jews and, significantly, it does not include Anne's famous statement about the goodness of the human heart.²⁹ Along with Levin, we must ask why the Jews were singled out for destruction, not for anything they had done, but simply for what they were. Because we now know Anne Frank in her particularity both in her life and in her death, we must struggle with Levin's question.

How, then, should we view the Holocaust? Steven Katz concludes that "the Holocaust is phenomenologically unique by virtue of the fact that never has a state set out, as a matter of intentional principle and actualized policy, to annihilate physically every man, woman, and child belonging to a specific people."³⁰ The Assyrians who resettled the people of the Northern Kingdom, thereby creating the Lost Tribes of Israel, committed ethnocide, not genocide. So Anne and Margot who died huddling together in the cold, and all the other Jews who died at the hand of the Nazis were not simply the victims of a universal tendency toward intolerance; they were the victims of a virulent racism that has yet to be fully comprehended. Not every one regards the uniqueness of the Nazi enterprise as important. Michael Goldberg agrees that Katz has proven the uniqueness of the Holocaust, but he asks, "So what?"³¹ He reports that, at a scholarly meeting just before Katz's book was published, "someone perceptively asked, 'But, Professor Katz, what if you're not interested in Nazism?'" Goldberg reports that Katz "was truly stunned by the question" and feebly responded that "the imperative of scholarship is understanding." I will return to the question "so what?" shortly, but first Goldberg's position deserves more attention.

He sees a civil Judaism that makes the Holocaust's uniqueness the centerpiece of a civil religion, one in which the God of the People Israel has no role. Those who follow this religion have, in his view, made the Holocaust the master story of Judaism thereby downgrading the Exodus story to just one among many in the Jewish tradition. Thus, asks Goldberg, "What has replaced God as civil Judaism's center of devotion?"³² He answers, "For those who worship at the Holocaust cult, the object of veneration can be but one thing: survival." For Goldberg, surviving as Jews requires the master story of Exodus, of God on Mt. Sinai to whom the Israelites responded "we will hear and we will do."

Goldberg is right to argue that making the Holocaust the master story of Judaism is to commit idolatry. Even so, wanting to know how the Shoah came to be is not the same as being "interested in Nazism," as Goldberg suggests. We can, along with Levin, want to understand how this unique evil arose without making an idol of survival. Of course, this is not Levin's question alone: perhaps we should say it is *the* question.

Bernard Harrison, in a major article in the Winter 1996 issue of *JUDAISM*, addresses this question directly.³³ "I want to say that the Holocaust is in one

respect the same as every other human disaster; in another respect unique. Its universality resides in the nature of the sufferings inflicted. Its uniqueness resides in the nature of the iniquity involved in inflicting them.”³⁴ His analysis of this iniquity, this appalling sin, offers us a start on the path to answering *the* question. Central to his analysis is how we form our identity, how we come to our understanding of who we are.

Harrison distinguishes two principal ways of establishing and maintaining an identity: by propagation and by objectification. By propagation Harrison means acquiring one’s identity in a context of mutual influence with others who are often different. By objectification he means rejecting the influence of the different others and clinging to an abstract ideal from which all that is alien has been purged. As young Catholic, Harrison was greatly influenced by the family of a Jewish school friend. He did not become a Jew but he learned to “talk like one;” that is, he had absorbed and made his own many of the ways of Judaism. For example, he found great value in the way the rabbis interpreted the law, not by *obiter dicta*, but by ongoing discussion open to whomever makes the effort to join in.

To form an identity by propagation requires a capacity to accept an apparent chaos of influences affecting one in ways often unforeseen and unforeseeable. Not everyone has this capacity. “To some always, and to many in some moods, this apparently chaotic landscape, of individual minds and national identities forming themselves on one another, and by absorbing alien influences becoming more and more strangely and dangerously themselves in ways unforeseen and unforeseeable either to patriotic sentiment or to the forces of social control, conveys a kind of horror.”³⁵ It is the inability to cope with the uncertainties inherent in the human condition that leads persons to reject ambiguity and fixate on “the momentary concepts of collective identity, national, political, or religious as absolute” and to seek “objective” identities such as “I am a pure Aryan.”

How can we understand Harrison’s use of the term “mood”? To characterize the circumstances leading up to Hindenburg’s offer to Hitler to form a government in 1933 as producing a mood is perhaps an understatement. These circumstances were surely extreme: the loss of World War I, the harsh Treaty of Versailles that led to severe hardship, including widespread hunger, and to the hyperinflation of the Twenties that virtually wiped out the middle class, the onset of the great depression, all these made the Germans ripe for “objectification.” To list these is only to suggest what such an understanding must include. Of course, to understand is only a beginning. The prospect that an understanding, accounting for what led to the attempted murder of all the Jews, would lead to the end of “ethnic cleansing” and other murderous evils at large in the “New World Order” is problematic at best. What agency can be devised by governments to accomplish this? The iniquity lies in acting on this view of identity. To be willing to murder innocent people to maintain and protect one’s identity against what are inherent features of the human condi-

tion—that is the fundamental sin. There will always be those who stand ready to commit the sin—we have among us deniers of the Holocaust and militant right-wing groups and militias.

American policies like the Marshall Plan averted the kind of devastation that fell on the vanquished after World War I. The Holocaust Museum in Washington and similar efforts elsewhere to educate the public are important. The attendance at the Museum in Washington, which has greatly exceeded expectations, can be taken as a sign of the readiness to confront the “monstrous implications” of the Holocaust. But the evidence remains mixed.

Anecdotal evidence has its place here. At a lecture I heard on Freud last summer in Vienna, the speaker noted that Freud, in *Moses and Monotheism*, had shown that Jewishness was a matter of socialization and thus not a matter of race: from this it followed that the Jewish issue was settled. Surely it was not simple confusion about the relative weight of nature and nurture that called forth the Holocaust. Are not theories of race the effect, rather than the cause, of anti-Semitism? Outside, in bookstalls on the street, copies of Daniel Goldhagen’s *Hitler’s Willing Executioners* in German translation were much in evidence; sales of the book have been brisk in Germany and Austria. One can perhaps hope that, were he still living, Meyer Levin would find that the story he wanted to tell has been told, and he could now abandon his obsession and get on with his own work.

NOTES

1. Lawrence Graver, *An Obsession with Anne Frank: Meyer Levin and the Diary* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).
2. *The Diary of Anne Frank: The Definitive Edition*, edited by Otto Frank and Mirjam Presser (New York: Doubleday, 1995).
3. *Anne Frank Remembered*, a documentary film by Jon Blair.
4. Graver, p. 8.
5. Graver, p. 9.
6. Meyer Levin, *The Old Bunch* (New York: Viking, 1937) and *Citizens* (New York: Viking, 1940).
7. Graver, p. 5.
8. Graver, p. 11.
9. Graver, p. 11.
10. Graver, p. 12.
11. Graver, p. 13.
12. Graver, p. 228.
13. Meyer Levin, *Compulsion* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1956).
14. Graver, p. 238.
15. Graver, p. 231.
16. Frank and Presser, p. 332.
17. Graver, p. 95.

18. Graver, p. 130.
19. Graver, p. 95.
20. Arthur Hertzberg, "Israel and American Jewry," *Commentary* 44 (August 1967): 73.
21. Graver, p. 16.
22. Edward Rothstein, "Anne Frank: The Girl and the Icon," *New York Times*, February 25, 1996, p. H 23.
23. While Anne Frank's is the most famous of children's Holocaust diaries, there are many others worth serious attention. A place to begin is the first anthology of diaries children wrote during the Holocaust, *Children in the Holocaust and World War II: Their Secret Diaries*, edited by Laurel Holliday (New York: Washington Square Press, 1995). It contains portions of diaries of twenty-three children and teenagers ranging in age from 10 to 18. Holliday states (xiv) that in "some ways, Anne Frank was not representative of children in the war and in the Holocaust. Because she was in hiding" when she wrote and thus isolated from the violence and cruelty experienced by Jews in Nazi hands. True, but we do now know about her life and death in Bergen-Belsen. These selections portray "life in the streets, the ghettos, the concentration camps as it was lived by millions of children throughout Europe." The book contains a bibliography and references to the complete diaries.
24. Graver, p. 60.
25. Graver, p. 61.
26. The film was shown in Santa Cruz for one week with one showing per day beginning at 5:10 PM. Its treatment in San Francisco was similar. The outstanding reception given to the film at the Academy Award celebration and to Mies Giep, who spoke there and who had daily brought food, supplies, and human contact to those in hiding, makes this handling of the film most puzzling.
27. *New York Times*, p. H 24.
28. *New York Times*, p. H 24.
29. This sentimental view of the human heart has become a touchstone for so many. How should we view it? In his essay, "Evolution and the Bible: Genesis 1 Revisited," *Commentary* 80 (November 1988): 29–39, Leon Kass offers a reading that shows why the creation story is not invalidated by the theory and evidence of evolution. Along the way he suggests an answer to our question. Kass notes, that over the six days of creation, God did not pronounce all His works good. Thus, God did not find the heavens good, nor did He pronounce Adam and Eve good. Kass argues that God's judgment of almost all of His work as good should be interpreted, not as a moral judgment, but as one of the suitability of each created object to its purpose. God's neutrality toward the heavens could perhaps serve to rule out the worship of the stars. (Astrology is still with us.) More importantly for our purpose, Kass argues that God is silent about Adam and Eve because a judgment about human beings must be a moral one; practical efficacy makes no sense since the earth and all that is in it are for the human race. It remained to be seen whether "people are truly good at heart." The flood suggests that God had doubts. The evidence since then is, at best, mixed.
30. Quoted by Michael Goldberg in *Why Should Jews Survive? Looking Past the Holocaust Toward a Jewish Future* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 46.
31. Goldberg, p. 47.
32. Goldberg, p. 49.
33. Bernard Harrison, "Talking Like a Jew: Reflections on Identity and the Holocaust," *Judaism* 45 (Winter 1996): 3–28.
34. Harrison, p. 16.
35. Harrison, p. 20.

World Over and Jewish Cultural Literacy

BROOKE BALDWIN

FROM 1940 TO 1983 THE NEW YORK BOARD OF JEWISH Education published *World Over*. A children's magazine, its purpose was to increase the level of cultural literacy among young members of the Jewish community. Not partisan to any particular sect, the magazine provided readers with a range of features on Reform, Conservative, and Orthodox views. Founded on the concept of *kelalyisrael*, the community of Israel, *World Over* was in many ways an extension of the principles on which the New York Kehillah had established the Bureau of Jewish Education in 1910.

The leadership of the New York Kehillah saw the Bureau as a way of formalizing the process of Jewish education; according to the *Morgen Journal*, an Orthodox Yiddish daily, the Bureau represented "the first systematic attempt to bring order out of the chaos of Jewish education in America."¹ Although there had been approximately 200,000 Jewish children in the United States in 1900, it was estimated that only 36,000 had received any kind of organized instruction at a given time.² Rabbi Judah L. Magnes, founder of the Kehillah of New York, was one of a group of Jewish organizers who believed that ensuring a proper education for children was "crucial to the survival of the Jewish community."³ At the same time, the New York Kehillah believed that assimilation and material success required that Jewish education occur not in place of—but rather, in harmony with—public education. In his history of the New York Kehillah movement, Arthur Goren notes that "for the Jewish immigrant and his Americanized mentors, the public school was the great democratic institution, the bridge to the new society."⁴ In recognition of the great time demands that school and extracurricular activities placed upon children, the Bureau of Jewish Education emphasized that any Jewish education must take forms sufficiently interesting and stimulating to hold the attention "even of tired children."⁵ More than 25 years before the establishment of *World Over*, the Bureau had considered establishing a magazine for youth.

By the time Morris Epstein, Sigmund Laufer, and Ezekiel Schloss established *World Over* under the auspices of the Bureau in 1940, it had already been 18 years since the dissolution of the New York Kehillah "experiment," as Goren put it. By the 1940s, it was clear that the Kehillah's vision of widespread, formalized Jewish education had not been realized. Nonetheless, *World Over*—with its publication schedule tied to the academic

BROOKE BALDWIN writes on American culture and children's literature.

year and its emphasis on capturing the imagination of young readers—seemed to embody the Kehillah’s educational principles. The bimonthly magazine conceived of itself as a learning instrument that challenged its students and that reinforced ideas taught at Hebrew school and in the home, but with a decidedly non-academic feel. “We tried to make it fun” said Laufer, Associate Art Director of the magazine [see interview below]. Laufer, Epstein, and Schloss produced most of the text and artwork for the magazine while incorporating stories and essays submitted from both inside and outside the U.S. The annual subscription rate was \$1.25 in 1955 and increased to \$7.50 by 1983, the magazine’s final year of publication. There were no advertisements, with much of the publication costs offset by contributions from the New York Jewish Board of Education.

The editors of *World Over* struck a gentle balance between keeping young readers’ attention and maintaining the educational integrity of the magazine. Each 16-page issue included illustrations that complemented the written text, and the magazine featured vivid cover art that was explained in a feature article or a retold biblical story. On the cover the Hebrew date was printed beginning in 1951 (5712) along with the subtitle “A Magazine for Young People.” The magazine’s text was in English, and Hebrew words appeared in bold print with accompanying definitions. Serial stories were an integral part of the magazine, as was “Now You Know,” a feature that profiled a Jewish personality (boxer Benny Leonard, for example) or explained the origins of certain Jewish traditions (why salt is sprinkled on bread). The magazine typically included a section called “People in the News,” which highlighted famous contemporary Jewish figures and their recent achievements and activities. Several cartoons ran in each issue, including “Joey and his Friends,” which illustrated the daily life of a Jewish boy. *World Over*’s news coverage included major world events (the assassination of President Kennedy or the creation of the United Nations) in addition to items of particular interest to the Jewish community. The last two pages of each issue featured games that tested the reader’s knowledge of Jewish culture and history and a section dedicated to readers’ letters. The back page presented “Highlights of History” or “Legendland” in cartoon form.

World Over stands as an example of what a community can do to generate interest in literacy and education. It is also another demonstration of the interconnectedness of religious education and cultural identity. As Edward Hulmes noted in 1989: “In contrast with the tendency of Western education to break up the content of a social heritage into different kinds of subject matter, the traditional type of Jewish education retained the Jewish social heritage in the undifferentiated form in which it was lived. When the youngster studied Torah, he studied simultaneously everything that had to do with making him a worthy member of the Jewish community.”⁶

An Interview with Sigmund Laufer

In his seventies, Sigmund Laufer is the last living member of the founding editors of *World Over*. I spoke with him last year in his New York City apartment where he lives surrounded by his and his late wife's artwork.

How did you become involved with World Over?

In 1947 I was an artist coming to New York from Israel, so I was familiar with things Jewish. I started doing some freelance work for the magazine and very soon they offered me a position as associate art director, reporting to Mr. Schloss. There were three people, Mr. Schloss, Mr. Epstein, and myself who made up the magazine staff.

What was your mission in publishing the magazine?

The magazine was an all-purpose Jewish magazine. It was supplementing what children were learning in an afternoon school. That means general aspects of Jewish knowledge, history, culture, music, art.

What made it possible for this magazine to exist?

One of the many aspects of having a unified Jewish Kehillah was, among others, the chance to publish a children's magazine. That fell apart eventually because of tremendous antagonism between people who have different ideological ideas of what Judaism is about.

How was it published?

We published from October to May, which was more or less the school year. At one time, I think 1946 or 1947, we published summer issues, which were not very successful. We sent the magazine to summer camps. This worked for a year or two but, we never got any peace of mind. We were working year-round at this point, and it was not worth the effort. So we tried to put out 15, 16 issues from October to May. We were trying to explain central aspects of Judaism to children who didn't necessarily learn these things in their Hebrew school, afternoon school, or Sunday school. This type of publication enriched their knowledge of things Jewish.

How did you decide what to include in the magazine?

We tried to keep above the fray and not enter into day-to-day political debates. Anything that had greater cultural significance, like the Yiddish movement, would be included. We tried to discuss aspects of Judaism and its history from all over the world. I remember that Morris [Epstein] had on his wall a cartoon-hanging saying, "We are editing a children's book, fun fun fun." And of course for us it wasn't "fun fun fun." You had to have a critical faculty in order to evaluate what you were putting into this magazine. Children are very leery if they think they are being talked down to. So we made a point of keeping a considerable level of complexity without being too hard to grasp. The magazine appeared every two weeks. We were three people and one secretary, that's all. It worked very well. We were very close to one another. We knew each other better than our respective spouses. And had a great time doing it.

How did all of the writing get done with only three on staff?

We encouraged contributions from people outside the staff, particularly from individuals who had made a name for themselves. We nurtured outside talent because we couldn't write it all ourselves. The best pieces were those not written specifically for children. We very often would take something that was good writing and we would simplify some of it with the permission of the author. We tried to have it amusing, not stuffy.

We had people from Israel writing for us. We had a lot of special issues, and we even produced film strips. This very often became important educational material because people wrote to us saying, "Why don't you give us more of that?" We ourselves learned while we were writing because we had to do research in order to get all the stuff out.

How did you keep the attention of your readers?

We tried photography and illustrations, which gave us the chance to be imaginative. Very often the graphic material was functional. If you describe history and you can have the historical documents reproduced, that makes it more concrete. It plays an important role in any children's book because children respond to visual images.

Did World Over affect people or groups aside from the children who were targeted?

The Catholic Church subscribed to *World Over*. They came to us because they wanted to put out a children's magazine, and they thought ours was very successful. *Scholastic Magazine*, the largest publisher of children's magazines and books, was a subscriber, and the director of *Scholastic Magazine* was very positive about what we were doing. Golden Books, one of the biggest publishers of children's books in America, also subscribed to our magazine. Protestant groups came to us and were interested and subscribed. All in all we had a large number of non-Jewish subscribers.

Aside from serving its educational purpose, how did World Over affect things in the Jewish community?

There was a change in the character in the Jewish community in the last 50 years. Up to World War II you had a large, worldly Jewish community. That means Conservative and Reform were much more prevalent. As time went on the Reform movement produced a magazine which was for older children. Orthodox Jewry started to publish a magazine called *Our World*. People who were rigid in their convictions about Orthodox Judaism simply stopped subscribing to our magazine.

Circulation was pretty high outside of New York because people were not as rigid in conforming to stereotypes of the various groups that we had in New York. But it was not so high inside of New York. So slowly there was this rejection from New York Jewry, a falling apart between the groups. But since the financial support came from New York, we couldn't put out a magazine that simply spoke to the rest of the country; the subscription rates were not enough to pay for that. This was the end of the magazine. In the end they hired two

young people, and I worked with them for one or two years. They were very nice young people but they thought that by using modern advertising they would increase circulation. That's all right for soap, but not for a magazine that has something more substantial to offer. After that the circulation fell to about 30,000 and that was the end of it.

What makes you most proud of your work with World Over?

The circulation reached a top of about 106,000 around 1954 or '56. As circulation went up that was a proud moment; there was approval by large groups of people who thought this was a worthwhile venture.

Finally, how did you come up with the title for the magazine?

The title in Hebrew is *Olam Umlo'o*. That's as close as it translates. I think it's biblical. It means the world and its contents, the world in its fullness. In English it makes more sense to call it *World Over* instead of the world in its fullness. We were trying to encompass all Judaism. Perhaps some of the readers of your journal remember *World Over* and were influenced by it.

As I left Sigmund Laufer's apartment, I could not help but wonder whether the magazines that replaced *World Over* were thriving. Could they pack as much learning into so much fun? And if not, what would that say about the Kehillah experiment, *kelal yisrael*, and the contemporary Jewish community.

NOTES

1. Arthur A. Goren, *New York Jews and the Quest for Community: The Kehillah Experiment, 1908-1922* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), p. 99.
2. Chaim Isaac Waxman, *America's Jews in Transition* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1983), p. 52.
3. Goren, p. 86
4. Goren, p. 98
5. Goren, p. 97
6. Edward Hulmes, *Education and Cultural Diversity* (London: Longman, 1989), p. 54.

SARAH SINGER

Jacob Dreams of His Son Joseph

Joseph's brothers, who were jealous of him, had sold him into slavery, but told their father, Jacob, that Joseph had been killed by a wild beast. They brought back Joseph's coat stained with blood to corroborate their story.

Beyond loss,
You are ten once more,
Come toward me
In this familiar place,
Now as before,
Arrayed in light
And sound of limb.

Are full of talk
About your bright new coat,
And what Judah said
When the old ram
Strayed from the flock,
And the white goat
You raised and fed
Followed you home.

I listen, rapt,
Give you bread
And barley cake,
Hold you close
Again, again
Until I wake.

SARAH SINGER is the author of three books of poetry, the most recent of which, *The Gathering*, appeared in 1992. Her work has also been published in anthologies and periodicals. Among her awards are five from The Poetry Society of America. She is a member of PEN, The Poetry Society of America, Poets & Writers, and other literary groups.

The New Liturgies

ARNOLD JACOB WOLF

THESE ARE NOT ESPECIALLY DEVOUT TIMES IN THE HISTORY of our people's spiritual career. I would not have expected in advance any outpouring of new prayer books of quality and imagination. Perhaps it is precisely the void in our inner lives that calls forth passionate, even somewhat desperate, attempts to refashion and to reconfigure our traditional liturgies. From all wings of Jewish religious life—the Orthodox right, represented by the many prayer books published by Artscroll, the left, exemplified by Marcia Falk's poetic *Book of Blessings*, a non-prayer book, and all the organized movements in between—we have new projects and new volumes of prayers and commentary.

There are two tendencies at work in these new prayer books, and the two seem to me utterly contradictory. One is the recovery of traditional texts: more Hebrew, more lost or formerly objectionable ideas and formulations, more pages of more unfamiliar words that come from the past history of Jewish worship. The other trend is a relentless censorship of words and ideas found ethically impermissible or aesthetically repulsive. The most obvious tendency of this kind is an expression of Jewish feminism, a doctrine that holds that our new liturgy must be rendered gender-free and unmistakably neutral as to male and female in all respects. But this is not the only force at work. The Reconstructionist dogma that the Jews are not a chosen people or the Artscroll insistence that no word may ever be changed or refocused despite the known history of a changing, indeed an ever-changing *Siddur*, are both examples of many ideologies at work to fashion the service according to one or another supposed theological principle. Obviously, recovery and reconstruction are compatible only with the greatest of difficulties and the most strenuous kind of manipulation. It is hard to go back to the past when you conceive of that past as patriarchal, primitive, superstitious, or mistaken. It is hard to make the liturgies more attractive and accessible if you hold that the new is, *ipso facto*, forbidden by the Torah. Yet both tendencies are everywhere at work; recovery and radical innovation are both omnipresent.

The amount of commentary in most of these prayer books suggests that they are as much for study as for *davening* or, perhaps, that the editors do not trust people to be able to pray without a good deal of information, encouragement, and motivation. The Reconstructionists, in particular, are very concerned to structure the liturgy most carefully so as to inspire more *kavanah* and lead to more spiritual

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success. One has the feeling about their and others' attempts that sometimes micro-managing community worship does as much harm as good. There is a virtue in spontaneity, even in randomness in prayer, along with fixed formulation.

The commentaries are meant to inform as well as to inspire. Biblical and, often, many other references are provided. Why? For further research or to shore up the validity of the prayer texts? There seems to be more comfort in trying to understand the words than trying to communicate with God, the God Who, as Abraham Heschel often said, is the real problem of modern prayer. These books are for the student at least as much as for the worshiper. But it may be that all of us who would become worshipers must begin as students in these times of both spiritual dearth and spiritual awakening.

The official Rabbinical Council of America (modern or centrist Orthodox) prayer book has, for the first time, been published by Artscroll, a generally right-wing publisher of traditional texts, with English translation and very conservative commentary. The sole apparent difference between this book and other prayer books previously published by Artscroll is the inclusion of prayers for the State of Israel and *Tsahal*, the Israel Defense Forces, radical innovations for the non-Zionist Artscroll community. It is surprising that the RCA, which once authorized the exquisite rendering of Rabbi David De Sola Pool in a dignified, classic volume published some years ago by Behrman House, would now entrust its official *Siddur* to Artscroll, about which some of its members have justly expressed very serious reservations.

The commentary to this RCA volume includes not a word from Abraham Heschel, not to mention Professors Elbogen or Heinemann, experts in our liturgy. It even omits Rav Kook, Rabbi Soloveitchick, and classical Hasidism. The most up-to-date acceptable commentator is Rabbi Samson R. Hirsch, and most of the comments come from more obscure sources, although the medieval commentators and the Kabbalah are also usefully represented. The overwhelming mood is antiquarian and even obscurantist. Can that be what the RCA meant to present to the Jewish world?

The ruling authority for this version seems to be the *Mishnah B'rurah*, a late commentary on the *Shulhan Aruh* and an extremely conservative one. The summary of "Laws" given on pages 978–992 is offered in this spirit, one of cautious, even cramped, obligation, with no sense of the possible exuberance and freedom of the Jewish prayer form. In this spirit, too, are old-fashioned theological views like the interpretation of Isaiah 1.28, with its terrifying promise of doom, taken here to refer to praying the Holiness prayers without a *minyan*, as if that could be either the prophet's intent or a legitimate occasion for God's wrath.

Women are told (p. 979) to pray one short prayer a day and not to utilize this *Siddur*. So much for a new women's *minyan* or other attempts to include women in Orthodox settings. There are many other mystifications: Page 27 offers an improbable historical explanation for the *Ashrenu* prayer. All of the Song of Songs is given with a richly allegorical interpretation that borders on the ludicrous, a reading that invades even the translation of that book. We are given also an elaborate service for "*Kaporos*" (pp. 772f.), a superstitious rite that Rabbi De Sola Pool would never have permitted to mar our liturgy.

Psalm 148 is said to declare that men and women should never pray together since "mingling" would be "immodest." The eighteen (or nineteen) benedictions

were “instituted by the patriarchs” (p. 98). Indeed, God created the whole world with the Hebrew alphabet (whatever that may mean) and if you don’t believe it, you must refer to the Artscroll volume on “The Hebrew Alphabet, An Overview” (p. 1196). There are “verses for people’s names” (pp. 924–926). Many physical responses are mandated: bowing, stepping back, holding one’s face in one’s hand. Imaginative typography and bright, rather gaudy, covers, do not obscure the medievalizing sensibility of the RCA *Siddur* or its retrograde implications.

Even the introduction by the brilliant and open-minded Rabbi Saul Berman is disappointing. Though he traverses the uses of the Hebrew word for “approach” to offer us insights on the varied nature of petitionary prayer, he fails to indicate that Jewish prayer is far more adoration or praise than it is request. The *Sh’mā*, the Sabbath *Amidah*, the Torah service, the *Alenu*, the *Kaddish*, the *Kiddush*, indeed by far the largest part of our liturgy is giving to God, not at all demanding or even requesting anything from the Deity. Yet Rabbi Berman only opens the gates of petition and leaves closed the many avenues of obedience, submission, exaltation, and adoration. This, too, seems both regrettable and reactionary.

In addition, the Artscroll book is full of plain mistakes. The *Pirke Avot* are not usually read between Pesach and Rosh Hashanah (pp. 544 f.). *T’shuvah* is not rendered by “responsa” (p. 320). On page 737 the word “and” makes the whole passage unintelligible. There is a constant confusion between Ashkenazic (generally employed) and Sephardic transliteration. Thus we find the barbaric “*Shavuos*” (p. 380) or “*kesubah*” (p. 203) and many Sephardic transliterations embedded in generally Ashkenazic ones. “*Haftarah*,” “*Tallis Katan*,” “*Avinu Malkenu*” are all examples of confusion and ambivalence. In the Artscroll’s unique version of transliteration, highly idiosyncratic readings abound.

The only prayer entirely transliterated is the *Kaddish*, for obvious reasons. But some prayers have English headings, such as the *Sh’moneh Esreh*, and these are not always traditional ones. Pages 181 and following are numbered 181 “a” to “j,” for reasons that are not at all clear. Some passages are said to require “concentration” (p. 232). Don’t any others? On page 737 the word “no” is a misprint. On page 770 “straights” should be “straits.” There are too many errors for a book of daily prayers.

This volume is encyclopedic, fascinating, and infuriating. It even includes a Yiddish prayer (pp. 620 f.) as well as some imaginative Kabbalistic and philosophical interpretations and comments. But it is too voluminous to pray, too obscurantist to accept, and too extravagant to represent modern Orthodoxy, not to say any other school less literal. Stressing “accuracy” over “beauty,” it seems to me to fall short of achieving either. That comes as a great disappointment to those of us who had hoped for a model and a light but are given only a stone. Thank God, we still have De Sola Pool’s traditional *Siddur* to help us pray as if we were still believing Jews.

II

Marcia Falk is the acclaimed translator and interpreter of the Song of Songs. For many years she has been working meticulously and cautiously on a book of Jewish prayers which now has appeared, to general approbation and gratitude. While hardly a complete *Siddur*, her *Book of Blessings* is full of inspired translations of the traditional liturgy and of modern Hebrew and Yiddish poems by women poets whose work is worthy of being heard or heard again.

Poetry is not, however, prayer. Meditation is not quite worship. "Passionate reflection," as Walter Kaufmann called it, is not precisely what Judaism has usually called prayer. Misspelling his name and espousing Kaufmann's views, Falk leaves herself open to the kind of criticism that he deservedly incurred. Whatever these "prayers" turn out to be, they are very beautiful, indeed.

Hal'lu: Praise

Praise the world—
praise its fullness
and its longing,
its beauty and its grief.

bursts through pain
and the moment
when the whole
bursts forth in joy.

Praise stone and fire,
lilac and river,
and the solitary bird at the window.

Praise the dying beauty
with all your breath
and, praising, see

Praise the moment
when the whole

the beauty of the world
is your own.

Sh'ma: Communal Declaration of Faith

Hear, O Israel—
The divine abounds everywhere
and dwells in everything;
the many are One.

Loving life
and its mysterious source
with all our heart
and all our spirit,
all our senses and strength,
we take upon ourselves
and into ourselves
these promises:
to care for the earth
and those who live upon it,
to pursue justice and peace,
to love kindness and compassion.

We will teach this to our children
throughout the passage of the day—
as we dwell in our homes
and as we go on our journeys,
from the time we rise
until we fall asleep.
And may our actions
be faithful to our words
that our children's children
may live to know:
Truth and kindness
have embraced,
peace and justice have kissed
and are one.

One of Falk's polemics is against the separation of body and soul, of "masculine" spirit from "feminine" flesh, as she sometimes implies. This gives her the opportunity to revise the great prayer at the end of the Sabbath, *Havdalah*, which is preeminently a statement of distinctions between the holy and the profane, between the Sabbath and the week, between Israel and the nations.

Distinctions

Let us distinguish parts within the whole
and bless their differences.

Like the Sabbath and the six days of creation,
may our lives be made whole through relation.

As rest makes the Sabbath precious,
may our work give meaning to the week.

Let us separate the Sabbath
from other days of the week,

seeking holiness in each.

Falk does not believe in a personal God, despite the insistence of her trusted interlocutors, Lawrence Hoffman and Rachel Adler, that only a personal God can inspire or mandate religious commitment. Her visions of the traditional blessings consciously finesse the traditional formulation of God as King or Commander Who gives us specific tasks for which we return thanks.

Blessing Before the Meal

Let us bless the source of life
that brings forth bread from the earth.

Blessing After the Meal

Let us acknowledge the source of life,
source of all nourishment.

May we protect the bountiful earth
That it may continue to sustain us,

and let us seek sustenance
for all who dwell in the world.

For her, personality implies anthropomorphism and even speciesism, the dangerous doctrine that people are more precious than other forms of life. (How many plants or animals would she sacrifice to save her child's life, I wonder.) So prayers must reflect the equivalence of all life and all of nature. This is surely problematic for the Jew who accepts a hierarchy of God's creation, however profound our love may be for other species. The moon is equal to the sun, in Falk's eyes. God is nature writ large and, so, transcendence collapses into immanence.

Renewal of the Moon

I lift my eyes to the hills:
heaven and earth are my comforts.
By day the sun does not harm me,
by night the moon is my guide.

It renews its light
for those just beginning,
who will one day find
their own renewal.

May the moon
be as praised as the sun
and all be equal
as when we began.

The real issue is: can we pray what we do not (yet?) believe? Marcia Falk is so certain of what she believes and of what she will never believe that she must bowdlerize the traditional *Siddur*. For my part, I hardly know what I believe and what I only wish I could believe. Unlike early, rationalistic Reform liturgists, I want the prayer book to express not only my views or even our views, but also what the generations have held to be sacred and what I may some day come to accept. We should not censor our classics to make them conform to our political or theological whim. If this be hypocrisy, make the most of it. Even Falk seems to sense that more is at stake than verbal honesty.

Sanctification over Wine for Sabbath Eve

*There was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.
The heavens and earth were complete, with all their host.*
Genesis 1:31–2:1

Let us bless the source of life
that ripens fruit on the vine
as we hallow the seventh day—
the Sabbath day—
in remembrance of creation,
for the Sabbath is first
among holy days,
recalling the exodus
and the covenant.

In the beauty of these phrases, Marcia Falk has helped us all to hear the words of our tradition and to make some of them our own.

III

Each of the movements in Judaism has produced a series of prayer books, normally with an editor and a committee of revision whose work inevitably compromises the original script. The work of Chaim Stern (Reform) and Jules Harlow (Conservative) have been sturdy, good texts for a long time, but their revised versions no longer receive universal approbation. Probably because they expect too much from a new *Siddur*, rabbinic communities are restless and eager for newer and ever more exciting products. Many Reform Jews, for example, find the present series of alternative services in *Gates of Prayer* bewildering, and newer, gender-neutral

formulations rather precious, if also inevitable. As for Hebrew, they want more of it, but also more transliteration, so they will not be shut out if they cannot read the alphabet. Their mood is very much one of tentative expectation, dissatisfaction in particular with one or another official book, but with no creative alternative available. Professor Lawrence Hoffman, a leading interpreter of the liturgy in Reform circles, has emphasized the importance of liturgical community and performance in addition to mere textual modernization, but the movement displays not much originality or creativity at work beyond a few rabbis or congregations like that of Rabbi Lawrence Kushner in Sudbury, Massachusetts. Rabbi Richard Levy may be our best single interpreter and translator thus far.

The new Reconstructionist *Siddur, Kol Haneshamah*, is a bold if also limited attempt to offer a new version of a traditional Jewish prayer book. It is self-conscious, obtrusive, and anything but textually transparent. Most pages feature at least three kinds of notes, called respectively “*kavanot*,” “commentary” or untitled comment simply following a Hebrew phrase, usually an explanation. The distinction among these various kinds of footnotes is not always clear, though the first of them is clearly meant to assist in focusing spiritual energy on the prayer, as are several more lengthy “guided meditations.” The notes are sometimes useful but it is not clear when they are to be studied, if one is to *daven* the entire service with a community, nor are the sometimes overly simple-minded interpretations always of much help. Arthur Green and Levi Weiman-Kelman seem to me to understand best the possible use of such helps to a worshiper.

Every Hebrew prayer to be recited by the congregation is transliterated, together with underlining that indicates the accented syllable. The pages are full of things to note, sometimes artistically illuminated, often quite burdensome. The volume is, perhaps intentionally, prosaic in tone, and can even fall into the banal, as when it quotes “you can’t take it with you” (p. 201). A predecessor volume published by the Reconstructionist movement in 1945 and publicly burned by Orthodox bigots, is sometimes quoted or, more often, revised, occasionally even repudiated as being too literal minded. “Judaism as an evolving religious civilization,” the cornerstone motto of classical Kaplanian Reconstructionism, is now viewed as a mere “metaphor” (p. 150). But many other dogmas are retained: there will be no statement of Jewish chosenness (as I pointed out) nor of the resurrection of the dead, nor of a “supernaturalism” that might make modern Jews “uncomfortable,” although miracles can be endorsed “symbolically” (p. 283), and a prayer for personal healing is included in the service (pp. 110f).

Ruthlessly eliminated are references to Satan (p. 286). The last line of a psalm (on pp. 54f) is dishonestly reversed in translation so as to give all peoples equal status before God. There is prayer in memory of a deceased gay or lesbian lover (pp. 509ff) which illegitimately refers to David and Jonathan, Ruth and Naomi, as if these pairs were twentieth-century same-sex partners. The “barren woman” of Psalms is now turned into a “childless household” (p. 362), and there are some barbarisms in original Hebrew prayers (p. 307: the very rare “*hamelech hamishpat*”). The book includes poems by non-Jewish writers, with uneven taste as well as questionable inclusiveness—Edna St. Vincent Millay instead of more by Amichai or Shlonsky.

The Holocaust is introduced into the *Emet v’Emunah*, hardly the most logical place for it (pp. 278–282). All in all, the *Siddur* is terribly earnest and serious,

sometimes even learned and thoughtful, but not very inspiring and not very rigorous theologically. That may well be the inevitable fate of our time and not merely of this small but energetic movement of Jews trying desperately to be more traditional and modern at the same time.

I take the liberty of concluding this survey which, I hope, will be the first of many, to acknowledge two of my predecessors. My two closest friends, Steven Schwarzschild ז"ל and Eugene Borowitz, may he be granted a long life, wrote these columns more than thirty years ago. Their discussions of Jewish and general theological issues constitute, in my view, brilliant and pioneering work; they can be consulted with profit even today. I wish to honor their precedent by citing two essays of theirs on the subject of Jewish prayer in the late twentieth century. Schwarzschild published an essay on "Speech and Silence Before God," a revised version of which is found in pages 84–99 and 167–170 of Jakob Petuchowski's book *Understanding Jewish Prayer* (New York, 1972). Borowitz wrote a chapter entitled: "Individual and Community in Jewish Prayer" in A. J. Wolf, *Rediscovering Judaism* (Chicago, 1965 reprinted in *Gates Of Understanding I* (CCAR, 1977)). Both of these superb studies were prophetic and will repay a careful re-reading at this juncture. Jewish prayer remains both a problem and a paradigm for both Jewish faith and any possible Jewish future.

RECENT PRAYER-BOOKS

Rachel Adler: *And Not Be Silent: Towards Inclusive Worship* (forthcoming, 1997).

Marcia Falk: *The Book of Blessings*, 1996.

Tikva Frymer-Kensky: *Mother Prayer*, 1995.

Rabbi Jules Harlow: *Siddur Sim Shalom*, 1985 (new edition forthcoming).

Richard N. Levy: *On Wings of Awe*, 1985 (Sabbath Prayer Book forthcoming).

Rabbi Nosson Scherman: *The Artscroll Siddur*, (second edition) 1996.

Chaim Stern: *Gates of Prayer (A Gender Sensitive Prayer Book)*, 1992, 1994.

David Teutsch: *Kol H'aneshama*, 1996.

RECENT BOOKS ON PRAYER

Rabbi Jeffrey Cohen: *Blessed Are You*, 1993.

Stefan C. Reif: *Judaism and Hebrew Prayer*, 1993.

Jews in the Victorian Imagination

Anti-Semitism, Misogyny, & the Logic of Cultural Difference: Cesare Lombroso & Matilde Serao. By NANCY A. HARROWITZ. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994.

Between "Race" and Culture: Representations of "the Jew" in English and American Literature. Edited by BRYAN CHEYETTE. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996.

Constructions of "the Jew" in English Literature and Society: Racial Representations, 1875-1945. By BRYAN CHEYETTE. Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Figures of Conversion: "The Jewish Question" and English National Identity. By MICHAEL RAGUSSIS. Durham: Duke University Press, 1995.

The Origin of the Modern Jewish Woman Writer: Romance and Reform in Victorian England. By MICHAEL GALCHINSKY. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1996.

Reviewed by RICHARD L. STEIN

On the ninth of September, 1837, following her first official visit to the City of London, the newly crowned Queen Victoria prepared a long diary entry about the responses of her subjects. Their warmth was extraordinary, so much so that the young Queen seems genuinely surprised: "I cannot say how gratified, and how touched I am by the very brilliant, affectionate, cordial, enthusiastic and unanimous reception I met with in this the greatest Metropolis in the World; there was not a discontented look, not a sign of displeasure—all loyalty, affection and loud greeting from the immense multitude I passed through; and no disorder whatsoever."

Victoria may have anticipated a cooler reception, even some hostility. Perhaps she assumed that there had to be varied emotions in a crowd of varied urban types. If so, that might help explain why her account lingers over one of the urbanites who helped form the touching unanimity of the occasion. When she mentions that she knighted the Sheriffs of London, she adds that the group included "Mr. Montefiore, a Jew, an excellent man; and I was very glad that I was the first to do what I think quite right, as it should be."

The incident tells us less about the Queen's own fair-mindedness (or philo-Semitism)¹ than it does about a wider cultural logic. We might call it a logic of inclusion, although its very operation reminds us of exclusions that did and might still take place. In identifying Montefiore as "a Jew, an excellent man," Victoria acknowledges the need for sufficient justification "to do what I think quite right." Other Jews might raise other questions, pose other problems. She is pleased, in other words, not simply to bestow the first knighthood on a Jewish Sheriff but to be able to do so, to encounter a situation that is so much "as it should be" that she can behave high-mindedly in response. As does the unanimity of the London crowd, Montefiore's superb credentials make possible an almost storybook resolution of a potential embarrassment. And both elements of the visit are worthy of note because they help clarify a fundamental social category: the people. To understand who "the English" are, even to understand the role of their Queen, it was necessary in 1837 to take account of Jews.

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Victoria recorded these remarks in the publication year of *Oliver Twist*, a novel in which the mysterious, unredeemable figure of Fagin—the archvillain Dickens repeatedly identifies simply as “the Jew”—stands for everything the hero and his proper social milieu are not and must not become. It is no accident that such a character appears in an urban novel, or that Victoria’s memory of a more venerable Jew blends with her experience of London crowds. Urbanization made questions of identity more urgent, more vexing, and linked them to questions of what the Victorians (and some post-Victorians in our own culture) called race. For Dickens and Victoria (like many of their contemporaries and some of ours), the Jew becomes an essential figure for answering or even formulating such questions. In a century increasingly preoccupied with problems of human similarity and difference, Jews—real people and creatures of fantasy like Fagin—offer a way to mark the division between outsiders and insiders, the exceptions (or potential exceptions) who make it possible to define everyone else in terms of a rule. “Them” when someone wants to speak of “Us,” they are, to alter a phrase introduced thirty years ago by Steven Marcus, *The Othered Victorians*.

Much of this may seem self evident, but it is worth recalling why such concerns should be so timely now. In his influential book of 1966, Marcus was exploring what one notorious nineteenth-century autobiography called the “secret life” of Victorian England, a Freudian “sexuality” named in the book’s subtitle but apparently so self-evident that it never needed to be defined in the text. Ten years later, Foucault’s *History of Sexuality* (first translated into English in 1978) radically challenged this notion of sexuality and the “repressive hypothesis” central to

it, questioning the complacency with which “We Other Victorians” (the title of his Preface) distance ourselves from the alleged hypocrisy of the last century. Foucault not only inverted Freud’s concept of repression, he restored “sex” as a subject of history and subjectivity as a historical category. Largely because of Foucault’s writing, identity has become a matter for social rather than strictly psychological examination, no less a political than a personal category. One result is a new attention to figures previously considered marginal, a new attention to the function of such margins in constituting a center. After Foucault, historians tend to examine the special case to raise larger questions of power, knowledge, and social organization; since deviations articulate norms, the general is sought increasingly in the particular.

It is in the spirit of this new particularism that most of the books under review in this essay turn to what might be called Jewish Cultural Studies, although most do not address Jewish culture in and for itself. Their common subject is the position of Jews in a larger cultural situation, the function of Jewishness in discourse. Their common concerns (visible as one scans the terms in their titles, especially those in quotes) are social “construction” and figuration, “race” as a category of social power, “the logic of cultural difference.” Their collective focus is less on real Jews—their collective or personal experience—than Imaginary Jews and a kind of Jewish Imaginary that provide some of the important fictions by which the dominant cultures of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Britain and America understood and perhaps still understand themselves.

The twentieth-century chapters of this story are better known than the earlier ones, and the most groundbreaking work in these books concerns the nineteenth

century. Only two of them focus exclusively on that period, but all acknowledge its importance as a formative moment in the emergence of a modern discourse on Jewishness. The very notion of modernism seems inseparable from efforts to represent Jews, who in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-centuries almost seemed to embody the “metropolitan” character of modern experience and the contradictions associated with it.² As Bryan Cheyette points out, Jews paradoxically came to stand for both a new order and a degenerate past, the breadth encompassed by the nation and the threats to its coherence. *Constructions of “the Jew”* demonstrates “the extent to which semitic racial representations saturated all aspects of British culture” from the late-nineteenth to early-twentieth centuries.

Not, however, in any single or simple way. The “protean instability of ‘the Jew’ as signifier” leads Cheyette to replace such categories as ambivalence, ambiguity, or even anti-Semitism with what he calls “semitic discourse.” The phrase compresses the book’s central argument: the “racial construction of ‘the Jew’ . . . is far from being a fixed, mythic stereotype.” It is precisely the malleability and indeterminacy of this figure, this fiction, that has made the Jew so important a marker of identity, so important in the evolution of the idea of culture and the shifting forms of modern cultural expression. In detailed, subtle readings, *Constructions of “the Jew”* traces the close relation between this evolving discourse and the shifting forms of twentieth-century writing—from the late nineteenth century to Buchan and Kipling, Shaw and Wells, Belloc and Chesterton, Joyce and Eliot (with a brief glance forward to the debates around postmodernism and Paul de Man). “With the advent of explicitly modernist texts,” Cheyette argues, “the very incoherence

of ‘the Jew’ was to be a potent expression of the impossibility of fully ‘knowing’ anything.”

Cheyette begins his study of this persisting modern crisis in the 1870s, with the implicit debate between the “semitic” texts of Arnold’s *Culture and Anarchy* (1869), Trollope’s *The Way We Live Now* (1875), and Eliot’s *Daniel Deronda* (1876), “Eliot’s ‘experimental’ post-realist novel.” The same writers provide the end point of Michael Ragussis’ *Figures of Conversion*, which locates these books at the end of centuries of debate over English national identity and within the “race wars” of Victorian England, centered especially around the “Hebrew Premier,” Benjamin Disraeli. It was a debate, as Ragussis brilliantly shows, that repeatedly reinvoked the figure of the Jew and the trope of conversion, and which through the influence of Scott’s *Ivanhoe* in particular became central to the evolution of the modern English novel.

And not the novel alone. After the French Revolution, questions of cultural difference and national identity assumed a new importance in English discourse. The “trope of conversion becomes a crucial figure used by writers of English history to construct, regulate, maintain, and erase different racial and national identities” (p. 93)—the crucial methodology, that is, by which the essential difference that is Englishness could be established. In *Ivanhoe*, as Ragussis demonstrates, Scott rewrites English history as Anglo-Jewish history, and in doing so not only “demystifies the trope of conversion by historicizing it” but creates a powerful critique of traditional constructions of national identity. By inserting Jews into the story of the Norman Conquest, “the event on which English national identity traditionally depends,” Scott identifies the exclusionary (we might say racist) im-

pulse that homogenizes gentiles and Jews, Normans and Saxons, English and Irish and Scots, into the seamless cultural "purity" of "English" history.

This hasty overview of a small part of a dense historical and textual argument suggests both its originality and its difficulty. No one before Ragussis has shown how heavily nineteenth-century English conceptions of "culture" depend on "the culture of conversion," how systematically (though often covertly) visions of national identity enlist the figure of the Jew, if only to eradicate it. Ragussis makes a definitive contribution to the growing scholarly exploration of race in nineteenth-century historiography. He adds powerful insights to the ongoing rediscovery of Scott. His account of Disraeli's fiction and the fictions around the figure of Disraeli himself should prompt reconsideration of the importance of his related roles as writer, politician, and cultural symbol. Perhaps most importantly, *Figures of Conversion* shows how deeply that central trope, and the "hegemonic plot of conversion," is embedded in the history of the novel. The transformation of character, so often at the heart of the fictional growth of fictional heroes, will never look quite the same.

At times the weight of Ragussis's analysis (or its sheer length—the book would have profited from careful cutting) seems too great (or too ingenious) for its subjects to bear. The excess is most conspicuous in the chapter on Maria Edgeworth's "self-conscious initiation of a revisionist tradition in *Harrington*." While the general case is lucid, it is hard to be fully convinced by the argument that this novel, ending with the Jewish heroine "suddenly revealed . . . through a trick in the plot" to be a Christian, "invents a way of subverting the procedure of figurative conversion by allowing the Jew to occupy a position outside

the procedure, as a reader." The strain increases with the corollary claim that the heroine's father "performs [a] deconstructive reading" of *The Merchant of Venice* that "reveals racial identity as a code whose key is based in textual history," a reading Ragussis sees as anticipating Freud's in *Moses and Monotheism*. But for all such moments of over-reading or over-modernizing, the extraordinary achievement of *Figures of Conversion* is undeniable: Ragussis' account of the trope of conversion will change the way we think about the cultural work of nineteenth-century fiction, history writing, and the historical formulation of "Englishness" itself.

Michael Galchinsky's aim in *The Origin of the Modern Jewish Woman Writer* is more specific but no less original: to reconstruct a literary history that has been ignored both because the writers are Jewish and because they are women. Yet, as Abraham Benish, editor of the *Jewish Chronicle*, wrote in 1856, "It is a remarkable phenomenon on the horizon of Anglo-Jewish literature that it is women, not men, that shine there as the principal stars." At the center of this constellation as mapped by Galchinsky are Grace and Celia Moss, founders of the *Jewish Sabbath Journal*, "the first Jewish women's periodical in modern history," and Grace Aguilar, the "most lauded Jewish woman writing in Victorian England," mythologized after her death as the "moral governess of the Hebrew family." For all this admiration, Aguilar's first critics described her as "sui generis" to eradicate any sense of her place in a larger community. Galchinsky, in keeping with much women's history, insists on the power of that community. This is a collective story, pointing beyond its main subjects to Anna Maria Goldsmid (the subject of Galchinsky's epilogue), Maria Polack, Charlotte and Judith Montefiore, Emma

Lyons, "Little Miriam," Amy Levy, Abigail Lindon, and many others. In spite of differences on a number of issues, they were linked by common commitments to women's education, women's emancipation within the Jewish community, and the emancipation of Jews within Victorian society generally. Their achievements include the first Jewish novel, the first history of Jews in England written by a Jew, the first modern Jewish conduct manual and cookbook in English, and an extraordinary output of domestic fiction and historical romance.

The very form of that fiction exhibits a central irony of this pioneering cultural work. Victorian Jewish women novelists did most of their writing in the romance. They worked, that is, in a mode "that already wore the code of the Christian past for Christian readers, in order to argue for far-reaching communal and social reforms among both Christian and Jewish liberals" (p. 44). If this argument tends to oversimplify a genre that increasingly is seen to grapple with the emerging tensions of "modern" culture,³ it nicely stresses the difficulties faced by writers whose attempt to imagine new possibilities of identity must be "assimilated" into traditional modes of representation. As Galchinsky points out in connection with the Moss sisters' romances of successful acculturation, "This assimilation of genre and plot itself is an emblem for Victorian Jews' attempts to anglicize and become assimilated into dominant Victorian society."

Aguilar's fiction requires a more complex reading, the result in part of what Galchinsky calls its "double address" to Jewish and non-Jewish readers. For instance, "The Perez Family," "the first story ever by a Victorian Jew to focus on a contemporary Jewish family's domestic life," was written for Charlotte

Montefiore's *Cheap Jewish Library*, a series of "didactic tales written for working-class Jewish families and sold anonymously . . . for pennies." Since the *Library* printed only 250-500 copies of each tale and distributed them by hand, Aguilar "could be assured of her readership." And Galchinsky shows that Aguilar must be understood in terms of other equally complex distinctions: between her treatment of Jewish men and women, or between the different significance of domesticity in Christian and Jewish cultures or, within the latter, Ashkenazic and Sephardic traditions. The strength of this fine book is its detailed and nuanced account of history, or, rather, of the multiple histories needed to describe overlapping and sometimes discontinuous forms of cultural identity.

Nancy A. Harrowitz acknowledges the need for this particularity in *Anti-Semitism, Misogyny, and the Logic of Cultural Difference: Cesare Lombroso and Matilde Serao*, which ambitiously links profoundly different historical subjects. She proposes an initial model for the comparison in the nineteenth-century racial "science" (even cited by Darwin) associated with an extinct animal called the quagga (something between a zebra and a horse), whose sexual contact with females of other species was "proved" to pollute all offspring of their subsequent breeding with males of their own species. Harrowitz suggests that this persisting cultural fixation on hereditary "taints," clothed in the "objective" language of science, itself recurs in the "self-betrays" of Lombroso's anti-Semitism and Serao's anti-feminism (indeed, each indulges in the second form of stigmatization as well). Yet in spite of the effort to provide detailed readings of important texts, the analysis remains general and somewhat predictable, as if the same quasi-Foucauldian "logic of

intolerance" could be discovered in many other versions of hatred and self-hatred in assorted social and literary contexts. Harrowitz, to her credit, raises the issue of historical specificity at a number of points. "Where," she asks near the end of a discussion of Serrano's love novels, "does one draw the line between what could easily and perhaps too simplistically be categorized as self-hatred or misogyny and an embittered but honest reckoning of precisely those conditions generated by inequality?" Unfortunately it is a question (and a kind of question) she does not answer satisfactorily, in this case or others.

Harrowitz's use of a nineteenth-century scientific model is primarily indebted to Sander Gilman, arguably the most influential practitioner of the new Jewish history, with more than a dozen books over the last ten years or so exploring the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century preoccupation with the interrelations of Jews, race, and disease.⁴ This project is represented in Cheyette's excellent new collection, *Between "Race" and Culture: Representations of "the Jew" in English and American Literature*, by Gilman's essay on "Mark Twain and the Diseases of the Jews," which works backwards from Twain's late "liberal" attack on anti-Semitism ("Concerning the Jews," 1898) to an account of his 1867 visit to Palestine in *The Innocents Abroad*. In the "Holy Land" Twain discovered remnants of the "simple, superstitious, disease-tortured creatures" to whom Jesus preached in the only form they could understand—by healing the sick. Twain's Biblical Jews were "materialists who could only understand the transcendental . . . if it were literally internalized and then written on their skins." Gilman finds echoes in Twain's accounts of modern Jews as a race to be distinguished from whites and blacks, not just diseased but "dis-

ease incarnate," infected above all by "the desire for capital." This leads to an uneasy liberalism, as in Twain's qualified support for Herzl's Zionism: "if that concentration of the cunningest brains in the world was going to be made in a free country . . ., I think it would be politic to stop it. It will not be well to let that race find out its strength. If the horses knew theirs, we should not ride any more." Gilman shows that for all his cultural independence and sympathy with the oppressed, Twain was caught up in a racial discourse that developed into twentieth-century anti-Semitism.

Between "Race" and Culture explores other aspects of this history from Romanticism to such High Modernist writers as Eliot, Joyce, Pound, Richardson, and Woolf. The focus, as the subtitle makes clear, is "Representing the Jew," but as Murray Baumgarten suggests, that familiar phrase may involve a contradiction in terms. Dickens, for instance, tried to make a kind of atonement for his portrait of Fagin with the more sympathetic figure of Riah in *Our Mutual Friend*, yet somehow that character too proves "non-narratable," shadowy and feminized, "outside discourse and thus . . . vulnerable to caricature." "What is at stake here," Baumgarten argues, "is whether the story of the Jews is possible within this secular discourse of the novel" (p. 51). Or perhaps, as some of the writers in the collection might add, whether it is possible in anything short of pathological form. The essays take us from outbursts of "undiluted misogynistic and Judeophobic scorn" in the fiction of William Gerhardi, discussed by Anna Freud Loewenstein, to the more pervasive instances in which writers are (as Cheyette puts it) "paralyzed by their inability to transform 'the Jew,' especially when . . . this figure is deeply embedded in the unconscious" (p. 3). That last term, for most of the writers in

this collection, is both personal and cultural, so that "writing the Jew" enacts a crisis of identity that extends far beyond specific writers and specific texts. Jonathan Freedman, for instance, moves quickly past Henry James's "garden-variety" anti-Semitism to consider Jews as vehicles "through which James staged an encounter with his deepest anxieties about himself, his art, and the relation of both to his culture." James "struggle[s] with a discursive current in the fin-de-siècle that conflated Jews, art, and social degeneration" (p. 62).

Maud Ellmann examines a similar pattern in and around the work of T. S. Eliot, whose "homogenous" cultural ideals (in response to charges of anti-Semitism he explained that he wished to exclude only "free-thinking" Jews from his utopia) seem designed to counterbalance the "textual diaspora" of *The Waste Land*, "in which the writings of the past deracinate themselves and recombine with words of other ages, languages, and authors, in a limitless process of miscegenation." Some modernists tried to present this social uncertainty less darkly, but not always with complete success. How, Phyllis Lassner wonders, can we explain Virginia Woolf's "failure to integrate her avowed sympathy with the plight of oppressed Jews with her representation of them?" It is an important question to answer, though not necessarily by insisting that Woolf should have recognized Jews as what Lassner calls "fellow outsiders." A more convincing account of an equally complex, sympathetic representation comes in Jacqueline Rose's essay on Dorothy Richardson, who makes Jewishness an index of the tensions surrounding women's identities in the first decades of the century. Rose treats the insight as almost prophetic. The central character in *Pilgrimage*, a Jewish woman named Miriam Henderson, offers "a cameo,

for feminism, of the clash between a liberal plea for individual rights and the particularities of cultures and nations, a type of vision in advance of how difficult it will become to square the circle between these apparently antagonistic priorities and terms" (p. 125).

That last remark also testifies to the moral and political engagement of Jewish cultural studies, beginning with the choice of subject itself. All the books I have been discussing are grounded in a revisionist reading of material that has been misread or simply ignored in much previous cultural history. This suggests a last and perhaps most important Foucauldian legacy: a commitment to certain forms of history as a matter of moral and political urgency. Michael Ragussis ends *Figures of Conversion* looking forward from his nineteenth-century literary subject to more modern and more violent "solutions" to "the Jewish question," which "the failure of the project to convert the Jews made necessary. . . ." If there is a "hero" in his book, it is the heroine-as-writer named George Eliot, whose revisionary fiction "educated the public in England's past crimes while demonstrating that the powerful ideology of conversion was in fact the latest tyranny from which the Jewish people needed to be set free" (p. 300). Michael Galchinsky, writing as a male Jewish feminist (his term is "profeminist"), urges his colleagues to speak for the generations of writers who until now have been almost completely forgotten: "An entire community waits to be reconstituted by the scholars to whom its debates and concerns most particularly speak" (p. 202). Or, as Brian Cheyette puts it in the last paragraph of *Constructions of "the Jew,"* "Until those who recall this writing employ a set of reading strategies which can take account of this history of 'semitism' then it will, in effect, still be continuing."

NOTES

1. Michael Galchinsky relates an old definition of this tricky term: "What's a philo-semite? An anti-semite who loves Jews."
2. For a suggestive, if at times disturbingly hostile account of the relation of Jews and modernism, see John Murray Cuddihy's *The Ordeal of Civility: Freud, Marx, Levi-Strauss, and the Jewish Struggle with Modernity* (New York: Basic Books, 1974). One might also consult the renewed discussion of the relation between high modernism and anti-semitism, as in Anthony Julius's recent study of *T. S. Eliot*,

Anti-Semitism, and Literary Form (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

3. See, for instance, Ian Duncan, *Modern Romance and Transformations of the Novel : The Gothic, Scott, Dickens* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).
4. Notably *Franz Kafka: The Jewish Patient* (New York: Routledge, 1994); *Freud, Race, and Gender* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993); *The Case of Sigmund Freud: Medicine and Identity at the Fin de Siècle* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993); and *Jewish Self-Hatred* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986).

A Triptych for Paul Celan

Paul Celan: A Biography of His Youth. By ISRAEL CHALFEN, introduction by John Felstiner. New York: Persea Books, 1991.

Paul Celan: Poet, Survivor, Jew. By JOHN FELSTINER. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995.

Paul Celan / Nelly Sachs: Correspondence, translated by CHRISTOPHER CLARK, introduction by John Felstiner. Riverdale-on-Hudson, NY: Sheep Meadow Press, 1995.

Reviewed by BERNHARD FRANK

Viewed through the wrong end of the telescope Paul Celan is that Romanian-Jewish poet who, though serving in labor camps, kept on writing enigmatic verse in German, and committed suicide by drowning in the Seine. Israel Chalfen's invaluable book, *Paul Celan: A Biography of His Youth* goes a long way towards correcting and refining the first and second points. John Felstiner's *Paul Celan: Poet, Survivor, Jew* goes an even longer way to prove the third point and helps us through

our difficulties with the poems. And Celan's correspondence with Nelly Sachs gives us some important first-hand clues to the troubled psyche of the perennial exile who ended his own life at the age of 49.

Paul Antschel (in Romanian spelled Ancel, which the budding poet changed into the anagrammatic Celan) was born in Czernowitz, Bukovina in 1920. Under Romanian control at the time, that territory had previously belonged to Poland, and was to come first under Russian, then German and, after World War II, once again Russian control. Hence Celan's education was in both Romanian and German, supplemented by three years of Hebrew school. Being linguistically gifted he also began, when only in high school, translating from both Russian and English into his language of choice, German.

BERNHARD FRANK was guest editor for the bilingual all-Israeli poetry section of the *International Poetry Review*, Fall 1996. His translations will appear in *After the First Rain: Israeli Poems on War and Peace*, dedicated to the memory of Yitzhak Rabin. His poem, "Elegy for My Father's Generation," appeared in *Judaism*, Fall 1994, and his article, "Nation in a Mirror: Observations on Modern Hebrew Poetry," in *Winter 1996*.

Celan's initial, and probably misguided, study of medicine in Paris was interrupted by World War II. When the Nazis took his parents away to concentration camp Celan, through a stroke of luck, escaped. The young poet, consequently, was saddled with guilt that was multiplied a hundred-fold when he learned that first his father, then his mother had died. Not even his own forced hard labor near his home town could mitigate that burden.

After the war Celan settled in Paris, wrote, translated, and attempted to make a name for himself. Recognition came slowly, the setbacks sometimes more than offsetting his progress. An ill-founded accusation of plagiarism by the widow of another German Jewish poet, Ivan Goll, just would not die down.

Celan was also unremittingly troubled, as well as challenged, by his continuing to write in what he called the "murderers' mother-tongue." In accepting several prizes and speaking engagements from German literary societies, he was exacerbating the internal conflict between his love of the language and his hate and terror of the Nazis and the anti-Semitism he sensed to be still very much alive in Germany.

Nevertheless, whenever his creativity failed him he would return to translating poetry into his "mother-tongue." Institutionalized as a result of psychic breakdowns for brief periods in his later years he was, supposedly by mutual agreement, separated from his wife and son. Guilt, conflict, a sense of persecution and mounting isolation did their work. Granted hindsight we, his readers, can never look at one of his poems or at a phase of his life without seeing it as an adumbration of his death.

He Said, She Said

Isn't the universe
in which we dissolve, at least tinged
with us?

Rainer Maria Rilke

Israel Chalfen in *Paul Celan: A Biography of His Youth* has rendered us the great service of interviewing surviving inhabitants of Czernowitz, including neighbors, friends, and, debatably, lovers. In that way he has attempted to reconstruct, before all first-hand accounts of them vanished, both the life and character of the young Celan.

No biography can capture its subject fully or objectively; too many lenses intercede: the writer's prejudices, the interrupted sequence of available records and, most troublesome of all, the subjectivity of the sources. Even at best memory colors, selects, and rearranges. And since biographies are not likely to be written about *obscure* people, both the awe of fame and the pettiness of envy may color even sincere attempts at recollection.

Given the limitations of sources approached long after the fact, and long after the subject became world famous, Chalfen still offers us a fine collage of the young Celan, interspersed with a small number of poems corresponding to the events described. We see the linguistic genius, his mood swings between gregariousness and isolation, and his struggle to find his role in the adult world. Is it the "real" Celan? Are Van Gogh's Potato Eaters the real potato eaters? None of us is linear, and Chalfen's camera approach from many angles makes that clear.

The most intimate accounts come from Celan's young love, Ruth Lackner. Chalfen maintains that, despite a courtship of many years, the relationship was never consummated. "Within himself,

however, Paul carried . . . the wound of failure. The young poet had failed because he could not understand love as a reality and not as a dream state, because he could only approach the woman he loved as a sister. . . ." Chalfen speculates further that "Paul had also failed to detach himself from his mother, so that anything feminine generally remained taboo to him." Here one has to wonder whether Celan might have had homosexual leanings or even relationships; the issue, however, is never addressed.

Especially moving is the chapter titled "Towards the Abyss," as it depicts the harrowing war years which left indelible scars on Celan's psyche. It is the horror of the concentration camps that led to his very early but best known poem, "Death Fugue" (*Todesfuge*), with its famous and controversial opening image of the concentration camp victims drinking the "black milk" of suffering.

Chalfen's book is rich in human details. Written in accessible prose, it has been translated into easy, readable English. To those who have come to admire Celan's poetry, the account of his early years will lend both insight and enjoyment.

Splitting the Lark to Find the Music

For the beautiful is no more
than Terror's forefront, which we
can yet barely endure.

Rainer Maria Rilke

John Felstiner in his introduction to the Chalfen book notes that, "There is . . . room, as always, to develop further the picture of his [Celan's] youth; and the poet's latter career still remains to be chronicled." In his book, *Paul Celan: Poet, Survivor, Jew*, Felstiner provides only the shape of Celan's life and internal conflicts; the emphasis remains steadfastly on the analysis of Celan's poems.

It would, for example, have been enlightening to learn how Celan's German language and literature students at the École Normale Supérieure in Paris remembered their teacher. And since Felstiner had access to both Celan's widow, Gisele Celan-Lestrangé, and his son Eric, it is disappointing to learn about neither the poet's relationship with them, nor the reasons for his living apart from them just when he would have needed their support most—after the onset of his mental illness. The appetite of the avid reader of biographies is here left unsated.

Felstiner's poetic analyses underscore the multiplicity of both the sources and the meanings of Celan's "hard dark ambiguities." He does an especially fine job with "Tenebrae," admitting, though grudgingly, some of the Christian influences on Celan's art. That fusion is shown again in "Benedicta" which has an epigraph in Yiddish. The *teneberleuchter* in the poem, Felstiner explains, fuses *tenebrae* (the darkness that covered the earth at Crucifixion time) with the Jewish *menorah*. And he identifies the vineyard workers in "The Vintagers" perceptively with the Jews digging their own graves under the German command. Yet having separated and analyzed the various elements of each poem in such minute detail, Felstiner may leave us with the intriguing jigsaw puzzle pieces all in a pile.

Scholars of Celan's work will garner much from Felstiner's ingenuity and comprehensiveness. A serious drawback, however, is the decision (and Yale University Press must bear the onus) to omit the German text for most of the poems. Although Felstiner states that the reader need not know German, some of his audience *would*. Those who don't must trust his translations. Here, his choices are at times debatable. It is one thing to translate a short Celan poem in

the professed manner of Emily Dickinson, replete with dashes, quite another to present the justly venerated "Todesfuge" as a melange of English and German. He turns Margarete (the beloved of Faust) into Margareta, which is neither German nor English. That is followed by lines like, "a man lives in the house *your goldenes Haar* Margareta/*your aschenes Haar* Shulamith. . ." (italics added). Such ambilingual talk, still common among German-Jewish immigrants in this country ("Ich hab die orange juice aufgepickt"), damages the poem to my way of thinking. Still, it is the only poem so treated.

Because Felstiner proceeds chronologically, he often repeats himself. Still, he is thorough and takes us from Celan's poetry to his speeches, his translations of Shakespeare, Dickinson, Marianne Moore, Apollinaire, Esenin and Mandelshtam, and even to the etchings of the poet's wife, Gisele Celan-Lestrangé, all analyzed interestingly and at great length. Felstiner discusses theories of translation, and tells us that he modeled some translations after Celan's recorded readings. Such renditions are of course in danger of being limited by both Celan's dramatic abilities and his mood of the moment; should not the poem on the page be allowed to speak for itself?

Happily, the later chapters of Felstiner's book gain both momentum and emotional depth. The account of Celan's stop-over in Israel in 1969 is the most personal, the most human in its details, as is the touching description of the poet's last hours.

She Wrote, He Wrote

Who, if I cried out would heed me
then amid the angel
hierarchies

Rainer Maria Rilke

Paul Celan/ Nelly Sachs: Correspondence is a treasure trove. We get, at long last, to hear the poets speaking off-stage, as it were, in their mundane voices. And we think: now we will learn the facts of Celan's later years directly, from the two poets' pens. Not so fast! While a correspondence avoids the interpreter and second-hand sources that biography must needs rely on, there are other lenses that distort more subtly and at times cunningly. We all bend the truth when we talk so as to achieve a particular goal—for pragmatic reasons (e.g., to get a promotion); for psychological ones (to project a certain image of ourselves) or simply for social ones (to be liked, to be interesting, to dramatize the banal). When politicians pause between each and every word, they are playing for time to weave their fabrications. When writing letters we have all the time we need.

With two established poets there is the added likelihood that they will write for posterity; that they will bar the mundane from their correspondence—which, like their diaries, they can expect to be published posthumously. It is remarkable that the letters of Celan and Sachs contain none of that self-consciousness. Two other obstacles, however, need to be surmounted, at least by the American reader. First, we must understand that the formality of the early letters is simply a Germanic school-ingrained respectfulness: Her "Dear Poet Paul Celan," his "Madam, I permit myself to come with a request," and "Yours in sincere gratitude and respect" are not signs of ossification, just standard politeness. Secondly, the effusiveness of the later letters means little in itself. That too is a German trademark, like the extravagant adjectives in everyday conversations: *Fabelhaft* (fabulous), *bezaubernd* (enchanting), *herforragend* (extraordinary) and *entzuckend* (charming).

Nelly Sachs was born in Berlin in 1891. In 1939, already a poet in her own right, she escaped at the very last possible moment to Sweden. There she lived with her mother in a one-room apartment and wrote. Her own experience with anti-Semitism and the horror of the Holocaust left indelible scars. Her poetry sings of it, first overtly, later in sublimated images. In the 1960s she was hospitalized repeatedly in psychiatric clinics. Sharing the Nobel Prize in Literature with S. Y. Agnon in 1966 was not a panacea. She died of cancer in 1970, in Stockholm, on the day Celan was buried in Paris.

Celan first contacted Nelly Sachs in 1954 to praise her volume of poems *Dwellings of the Dead* and to request a copy of her subsequent book, *Star-Eclipse*. We may speculate whether the adulation that led to the request was, understandably, laced with a degree of self-serving. After all Celan had already sought out the friendship of the established poet Ivan Goll.

Their views of the world differed sharply. Celan, the negator, rebelled against Jewish tradition even as he incorporated it into his verse and denied his God even as he sang of Him. "Nelly Sachs, dear Nelly Sachs! . . . Cruelty comes daily into my house, daily, believe me. What must we Jews yet endure?" Sachs, on the other hand, was an optimist and idealist. She believed that all the suffering in this world had purpose and a reward was awaiting in the beyond. She went to great lengths to rationalize life's more bitter aspects: "When we suffer," she wrote Celan, "we cease to belong to anyone but God—that is why our friends abandon us."

John Felstiner in his introduction to this volume picks up on the poets' calling each other Brother and Sister and, despite the fact that Sachs belonged to an earlier generation, sees the relation-

ship as just that. In several ways that is precisely what the two poets were—united by their exile, by the betrayal of what they considered their homeland and by their paradoxical dedication to the "murderers' mother-tongue." On this first level the book is touching, at times overwhelming. For while we have become inured to reading about the Holocaust itself, the intense suffering of two finely-tuned souls responding to the horror that they themselves escaped is a revelation.

The sub-text of the letters provides a more tortuous reading. The two solipsistic poets of genius try desperately to orbit each other; they manage to warm themselves briefly by their reflected light yet, ultimately, failing to buoy each other up, they drift apart. Rainer Maria Rilke, a poet Celan admired and early on emulated, speaks of the night and wonders, "Can lovers endure it better?" His answer: "No, with each other they merely conceal their lot." Though they were not lovers in any traditional sense of the word, that is precisely what Sachs and Celan had tried to do.

Each of them assigns the other a role: Celan, always guilt-smitten by the death of his mother (more so than of his father, whom he had resented), appears to have refound her in Nelly Sachs. This explains his eagerness to please her and to protect her. Since he felt that he had let his mother down it was his chance to make amends. He becomes truly fond of the older poet and the relationship is at its zenith during their May 1960 Zurich meeting, and a subsequent one in Paris that June. The Celans take great pains to entertain their visitor, and the glow of these encounters illuminates the correspondence for some time after. Later, as her hold on sanity becomes tenuous, Celan, ever the dutiful son, is careful not to burden her with his own mounting problems.

The role Sachs assigns Celan, unfortunately, is very different. The subtext of the letters implies that she has cast him in the part of the lover. An early letter addressed to "My beloved friends Gisele [sic.], and Paul Celan," contains a poem beginning,

Line like
living hair
drawn
death-night-darkened
from you
to me

and concluding, "But such is love." Though addressed to both husband and wife, this is really a love poem to Celan. It takes Sachs years before she spells Gisele's name correctly. And while she thanks her profusely for the gift of an etching, she shows no further interest in Gisele's artistic pursuits. It also takes a long time before she addresses "the little boy," Eric, by name. She never inquires about his progress nor does she ever enclose a gift or even a children's poem. The letters may be addressed to the whole family, but their content is focused solely on Celan: "Dear Wonderously deep, poet Paul Celan, I inhale your work when I go to rest in the evening. It lies beside me on the table and when the night is too hard to bear, the lamp is lit and I read again." That same letter, interestingly, ends with, "... I would like to shelter you from your own sorrow!" While Sachs was too frail to shelter anyone, she may have recognized Celan's need for a maternal figure.

In anticipation of their Zurich meeting, she writes, "Paul Celan, dear, dear Paul Celan, You are coming and then I will be in my homeland, whatever sand we may be standing on." Sachs's reliance on Celan grows rapidly. In addition to her poems she appears to use her

frailties as a lure. When she is hospitalized in 1960, she summons her "lover," and Celan, the obedient son, rushes off to Stockholm. It is not clear, according to the helpful editorial endnotes, whether the hospital or Sachs refused him admission.

Either way Celan's feelings were understandably hurt. Perhaps he was also beginning to recognize the role Sachs had laid out for him. His wife appears to have been way ahead of him there. She rarely signs her name to the letters Celan sends Sachs. The endnotes tell us that in 1961, when the plagiarism accusation against Celan had resurfaced, Gisele noted that Sachs had written and, though she must have known about their problem, never alluded to it. In his very next letter Celan informs Sachs (or Li, as she has taken to signing herself) that he cannot come visit her. They must all go to stay first with his aunt and then with Gisele's mother. The child, at long last, is cutting the umbilical cord.

The correspondence cools and grows sparse after that. Sachs sends her poems, mostly; Celan responds only rarely. The distance between the stars widens: he can no longer help her; no one can help him. In 1966, along with some of his own poems, Celan sends Sachs a portfolio of Gisele's etchings. Sachs, writing a few weeks later, neglects to refer to it.

Then, in 1968, the subtext of the correspondence turns ugly. For the first time in their relationship Celan, already swamped by his own psychological problems, asks for a favor, not for himself, but for Gisele: she is about to have an exhibit in Sweden. Could Nelly draw the attention of artists and critics she knew to Gisele's work? Could she help her get a showing in Stockholm? "There would be the added joy of your seeing [the etchings] as well," Celan concludes, naively.

We must keep in mind that by this time Nelly Sachs had been in and out of psychiatric hospitals for years. Still, her callousness, after all the endearments she had lavished on Celan, and all the attentions he had shown her, makes one cringe: she responds by enclosing the names of four Swedish galleries. German politeness goes so far that Celan, albeit in a very brief note, thanks her.

Later Sachs relents a little: "But if Gisele writes to me from [her showing at] Goteborg and lets me know the name and address of the gallery in Stockholm I will write to them and do as much as I can for her." What gallery? Again Celan thanks her.

Some time later Sachs writes, "Paul, dear Paul, have heard nothing from Gisele, am quite concerned. Is there to be no exhibition in Stockholm?" Surprise, surprise. Not a word in all this from Gisele, though she subsequently did write Sachs that she had not attended the Goteborg exhibit. Gisele never did get a showing in Stockholm.

And so the two solipsistic stars return briefly to their own pain-encrusted orbits. Celan would have seen their posthumously becoming super-novas in the literary heavens as an irony; Sachs would have seen it as their reward in the after-life. We, the star-gazers, are left with a bitter-sweet lesson concerning the frailties of the human psyche.

JUDAISM

The study of Jerusalem offers a unique opportunity to examine the impact of a dominant culture on a city. Each time Jerusalem was conquered and ruled by a different group, its physical appearance was inevitably reshaped, including the size and location of its public buildings, population, leadership, and governing institutions. What especially characterizes Jerusalem, of course, is the religious value it holds for each of the three major religions of the Western world. Dominated over the centuries by a variety of cultures and traditions, Jerusalem bears the stamp of each in its physical and spiritual legacies. It is fascinating, therefore, not only to study how each tradition has totally redefined this urban setting to suit its own political, social, and religious agendas, but also to compare the similarities and differences between them.

The recent political developments in the Middle East have been momentous and unprecedented. To help ensure their continuation and realization, they must be buttressed by a reevaluation and reinterpretation of the religious tenets in all traditions whose aim is, at times, confrontation and triumphalism. The purpose of these efforts should be the strengthening of each tradition's teachings regarding coexistence, tolerance, and the fundamental value of pluralism, along with a deeper understanding of what unifies them and what makes each unique and different. It is incumbent upon all who seek peace to reflect upon and search out the commonalities on the one hand, and define the differences on the other, for the purpose of mutual understanding and coexistence.

David Clayman & Lee I. Levine,
The Sanctity & Centrality of Jerusalem to Judaism, Christianity, & Islam

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